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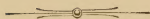
# PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIANITY

BEING AN ESSAY TOWARDS A MORE CORRECT  
APPREHENSION OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE,  
MAINLY SOTERIOLOGICAL.

BY

JAMES STUART, M.A.

*πνευματικοῖς πνευματικὰ συγκρίνοντες.*—1 Cor. ii. 13



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TO THE MEMORY  
OF  
MY FATHER,

THIS ATTEMPT TO ELUCIDATE THAT RELIGION FOR WHICH HE LIVED,  
AND SUPPORTED BY WHICH HE DIED,

IS DUTIFULLY INSCRIBED.



## ADVERTISEMENT.

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I DO not propose to detain the reader with any preliminary remarks on the nature of the work here submitted to his perusal. If the title does not convey to his mind a general notion of what he may expect to find in it, I could hardly hope to do so within the limits of a short preface. Besides, I am unwilling to increase still further the bulk of a volume which, notwithstanding every effort to compress it, has swollen to much larger dimensions than I could have wished. I shall only say that by looking through the table of contents a view will be obtained of the scope of the investigation, while the introductory chapter will afford some indication of its character, as well as of the reasons which have compelled me to undertake it, and thereafter, I trust, the subject will open itself up not unnaturally. One suggestion I may be allowed to offer: if the reader feels that I have gone more minutely into the analysis of the typological system of the Epistle to the Hebrews than is either agreeable to his taste or necessary to satisfy his judgment, let him pass over the seventh chapter, which may be left out without seriously detracting from the force of the main argument, though it will be well to glance at the contents, and to bestow more special attention on the section dealing with the writer's ideas on inspiration, with which the chapter concludes. My discussion has been specially adapted for those who can still continue to cite that epistle as if it were an infallible authority in matters of Old Testament interpretation.

For full details of evidence in support of the statements made on page 68 and elsewhere, I ought, perhaps, to have added a reference to Schürer's *History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ* (Clarks' Foreign Theological Library), and to Weber's *System der Altsynagogalen Palästinischen Theologie*.

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# PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIANITY.

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## CHAPTER I.

### IMPUTATION—WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IT INVOLVES.

AS this Work, on its negative aspect, will have the effect of eliminating the theory or doctrine of imputation in its various applications from Christian theology, it will be convenient to begin with a brief statement of what that doctrine is, and what it involves.

The theory of imputation forms an essential part of the system of Christian doctrine embodied in the standards of the leading Reformed Churches. Applied in the first instance to the primal sin, of which all men are supposed to become partakers through Adam, it has been extended to the sin of which Christ is supposed to have become a partaker through the human race, otherwise through the elect, and then to the righteousness of which all believers are supposed to become partakers through Christ. It has moulded and determined not only the doctrine of justification, but the whole scheme of salvation, including the constitution or person of the Saviour, and the nature, method, and limits of His work. Moreover, it has reacted on the doctrine of sin, giving rise to a peculiar, and, as we shall see, somewhat fanciful view of the relation of the first man to all his descendants. In its completest or most thorough-going and consistent form, the theory embraces the three applications just mentioned—the imputation of Adam's first sin to each of his descendants, the imputation of human sin to Christ, and the imputation of Christ's righteous-

ness to each believer. Consistency requires that these three applications should be either accepted or rejected together, though this has not always been done in the history of the Church. It also requires that the first should be held in the same sense as the two others, though neither has this always been done. Some who accept the first and second, reject the third; some who accept the second and third, reject the first, or hold it only in a modified sense; some who accept the second, reject the first and third; many accept, or at least profess to accept, all three; comparatively few believing theologians distinctly reject all three.

Whatever may be thought of the merits of the theory as an attempted expression of New Testament teaching, no one can deny that it has been worked out and defended with much earnestness and ingenuity. Its advocates have spared no pains to render it at once complete and coherent, and they have done whatever learning, ability, and industry could do to soften its harsher features, and obviate such objections as might fairly or unfairly be brought against it. It must also be confessed that its assailants have not always—perhaps have not often—been either very candid or very reasonable. They have attacked it with great vehemence. To some the very idea of imputation is so repugnant that they have poured upon it unmeasured contempt, representing it as traversing in the most direct manner the plainest dictates of reason, outraging the most elementary moral instincts, subverting the authority of conscience, and threatening to overturn the deepest foundations upon which all morality and all religion is based. But these have not always waited to inquire whether the idea were taught in Scripture, or what consequences would follow if it were; still less can they be said to have frankly and seriously dealt with the arguments of their opponents, or with the issues raised by the rejection of imputation in every form. Others there are—and these the most numerous—who impugn the doctrine at a single point only, and demolish that to their own satisfaction, but without indicating how they can still continue to hold the remaining points, which, as they rest on substantially the same grounds, must stand or fall with the one discarded. While a third class have displayed great expertness in exposing



the weakness of their opponents' arguments, pointing to the absence or insufficiency of the Scripture evidence, and urging objections which it might be difficult or even impossible to answer; but they have in general shown little disposition to deal with the statements of Scripture as a whole, to construct on their basis a complete and consistent system of thought, and to show how other doctrines, which they of all men deem most sacred, essential, and inviolable, can be maintained apart from the obnoxious theory. Yet true it is, that no reasonable man can be expected to give up a comprehensive and well-defined system of doctrine merely because difficulties more or fewer are seen to attach to certain parts of it, unless he receive in exchange another system, equally comprehensive and well-defined, and to which *fewer* difficulties are attached. This is what the assailants of the doctrine of imputation have forgotten, and this is why their assaults, vehement and well-sustained as many of them are, have been without any general or permanent results. They have merely nibbled at it, and the theological public, which, in English-speaking countries at least, is seldom misled by mere quackery, has turned a deaf ear to what it could hardly fail to regard as their impertinent solicitations.

In approaching the subject of imputation, our first endeavour must be to ascertain what is implied in the notion as we find it in common speech and common life, and then to define how far this common notion is modified, if it be modified, when it is applied to explain the facts and statements of Christian theology. Happily, there is in the New Testament itself a single example that will serve to place its nature in the clearest possible light. The Apostle Paul, writing of Onesimus, the runaway slave of Philemon, expresses himself thus: "But if he hath wronged thee at all, or owe thee aught, impute this to me; I, Paul, write it with mine own hand, I will repay it" (Philemon, 18, 19). Here there are three parties—Onesimus, who has done the wrong; Philemon, who has suffered the wrong; and Paul, who undertakes the work of reparation instead of Onesimus. A law of righteousness has been violated by Onesimus, in consequence of which he owes a debt to Philemon. Paul undertakes to discharge the debt.

The offer is accepted. The obligation lying on Onesimus at once ceases to exist, and he is treated by Philemon exactly as if the wrong had never been committed. Philemon has a claim at law against Onesimus; Paul pledges himself to satisfy the claim, the result being that Onesimus is at once discharged from the claim, which no longer lies against him to be satisfied. Nothing is said or thought about condemnation or justification, either on one side or the other. The only really essential thing in the transaction is the *transference of the debitum* from Onesimus to Paul. The character of the parties remains precisely what it was before. Onesimus, even in the judgment of Philemon, does not cease to be the wrong-doer, nor does Paul cease to be regarded as an upright man; only, the legal consequence of the wrong done by Onesimus is borne by Paul instead of being borne by Onesimus himself. By imputing the wrong-doing of Onesimus to Paul is just meant *transferring the penalty* of the wrong done from Onesimus to Paul, which, when so transferred, is visited on the latter instead of being visited on the former. This is the whole matter; and to introduce other ideas, or to multiply explanations, would only have the effect of mystifying and perplexing the case. It would be to "darken counsel by words without knowledge."

So much for the notion of imputation in the usage of common speech and in the affairs of common life. What, now, of the dogma which passes under that name in the sphere of Christian theology? Take, in the first instance, the simplest case, that of Adam's first sin, and, to avoid needless repetition, take it in its most pronounced, which is also, in a theoretical point of view, its most consistent form. The allegation is that the first sin of Adam, by which he incurred the penalty of death, is imputed to every one of his descendants as soon as they enter the world or come into existence, that the penalty due to that sin is inflicted upon each, and that this is done, not at the suggestion nor with the concurrence of the parties suffering, but solely in virtue of the peculiar relation that is supposed to subsist between the first man and his posterity, and which is described by saying that he is their covenant-head or covenant-representative. The differences between this

case and the previous, whether important or not, are too obvious to escape notice. For one thing, there is no real *transference* of the penalty from one person to another. Death is no doubt inflicted upon each of Adam's descendants, as it was inflicted upon Adam himself, and this is supposed to be due to the imputation of Adam's first sin; but even so, the penalty incurred by Adam is not *trans-ferred* either to each of his descendants separately, or to all of them together; it is simply *con-ferred* \* upon each of them separately, being at the same time borne by Adam himself. Thus it is not a case of one person taking the place of another, and discharging his responsibilities, or paying his debt. Not even a case of an indefinite number of persons assuming and sharing among them the responsibilities of one. On the contrary, it is something quite distinct from both of these. There is no proper substitution, no strict exchange of places and actions, in the matter at all. Posterity no more bears the penalty which Adam escaped than Adam, had he remained unfallen, would have enjoyed the reward which posterity relinquished. Posterity shares with Adam in the consequences of his disobedience, just as posterity, if the theory be sound, would have shared with Adam in the consequences of his obedience. Whether in the latter event the obedience of Adam would have been imputed to each of his descendants, so as to become the ground of their obtaining life, is certainly open to grave doubt, though it is not more doubtful than whether the disobedience of Adam is imputed to each of his descendants, so as to become the ground of their suffering death. Again, as already noted, posterity have no choice in the matter of accepting the consequences of Adam's sin; whereas Paul voluntarily undertook to meet and discharge the obligations of Onesimus. This may or may not be an important difference in a moral point of view, but that it is a real difference all must admit. Once more, the assumption of Onesimus's obligations did not in the least affect the moral character of Paul for the worse,

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\* In common parlance, the word *confer* is used only of advantages, and not of disadvantages; but the reader will indulge me so far throughout the present chapter as to allow me to use it in the strictly etymological sense as a correlate to *transfer*.

any more than the release from his obligations affected the moral character of Onesimus for the better. But, in the case of Adam's descendants, a complete change of moral character attends the supposed act of imputation. It is not merely death, the wages of sin, the penalty incurred by Adam, that is conferred upon each of Adam's descendants along with himself, but the sin itself, the vitiated moral character, the depravity of nature, which the original act of sinning produced, and which every succeeding act continued to aggravate,—this is conferred upon each of Adam's descendants along with himself. And this is conferred, not by the external act of imputation,—for it is not even pretended to be imputed at all,—but by the internal process of natural transmission, so that from all that appears it would take place exactly as it does whether Adam's sin were imputed or no. Now, since this inherent depravity, transmitted from parent to child, is of the nature of sin, it must be sufficient of itself and apart from the imputed sin of Adam to draw upon all mankind the penalty of death; and, therefore, the imputation of Adam's first sin, whether a fact or merely a figment, cannot be an essential condition, much less the sole cause of the death of all mankind. No doubt it is common to speak of original sin as itself a penal infliction on account of the imputed sin of Adam. But how can that be? If men are shapen in sin and brought forth in iniquity, if they come into existence in a depraved condition, if there never was a time when they were not polluted by sin, if the very elements of which they are formed are fallen, sinful elements, if, in short, as soon as they are anything they are something fallen, sinful, depraved, how can original sin be a punishment inflicted on account of the imputed sin of Adam? The first sin of Adam, if imputed at all, must be imputed to something already existing; if imputed to men, it can be imputed only after they have come into existence, and not before. But men in the very process of coming into existence have the taint of sin communicated to them; in a manner, they are sinful even before they exist, since the elements of which they are composed are fallen, sinful elements—the fountain from which they spring is a polluted fountain; whence it would seem to follow that original sin cannot possibly be a penal



infliction on account of the imputed sin of Adam. Depravity is communicated, not in the act of imputation, nor in consequence of that act, but in a separate, and not only a separate, but an *antecedent* process; so that men, almost before they have come into existence, or at anyrate, by a necessity of nature, and in the process of coming into existence, are subjected to the penalty of death quite independently of the imputation of Adam's sin; they would be treated exactly as they are treated whether Adam's sin were imputed to them or no.

Perhaps it will be said that at least Adam's own depravity was a penal infliction on account of his first sin. But even this much is not evident, and cannot be proved. Neither in Adam's case, if we may judge from analogy, nor in ours, is depravity a fixed quantity, such as it would be if inflicted on account of the original transgression. Depravity admits of degrees. All men are not born equally depraved; nor do they continue throughout life equally depraved; nor is there the smallest reason to suppose that Adam's depravity was a fixed quantity any more than the depravity of his descendants. The *act of sinning* depraves the nature; repetition of the act depraves the nature yet more. It lies in the very nature of a sinful action to work depravity. God Himself, so far as we know, could not prevent it, even if He would. And there is every reason to believe that depravation in Adam was entirely analogous to depravation in all other men.

I repeat, then, that the imputation of Adam's first sin, whether a fact or merely a figment, cannot be an *essential condition* of the death of all mankind. Perhaps we might even go a step further and assert that as all men necessarily suffer death, either on account of original sin alone, or on account of original sin augmented by actual transgressions, the penalty of Adam's first sin cannot be really conferred upon them at all. All men suffer death, but they suffer death on account of something else than the first sin of Adam imputed; they suffer death on account of their own original and actual sin, and this surely must be held to imply that they do not suffer death on account of the first sin of Adam imputed, in other words, that the first sin of Adam is not

imputed to them at all. Anyhow, there are at least these differences between the present alleged case of imputation and the actual case originally proposed. (1.) The penalty is not really transferred from one person to another. (2.) It is not even conferred on one person with another. (3.) It is conferred on an indefinite number of persons with another. (4.) It is conferred upon each of these persons, not at their request, but without their concurrence, and presumably in opposition to their wishes. (5.) There accompanies, or rather precedes, the supposed conferring of the penalty the actual and certain conferring of a state of character adequate of itself to incur the penalty; a fact which, at the very least, raises a strong presumption that the primal sin is not really imputed, nor its penalty really conferred at all.

Passing to the second alleged case of imputation—the imputation of human sin to Christ—it must be confessed that here it is much more difficult to state the exact form of the current doctrine. The point is one which is probably more widely accepted than either of the other two, yet I know not how it is, but modern theological writers appear to pass it over, not only without proof, but without even the decency of explicit statement. It is assumed that human sin must somehow have been imputed to Christ, but when, or how, on what principle, or even what amount of sin, is hardly ever discussed. Possibly the utter absence of Scripture evidence to support the notion that sin was *in any way* imputed to Christ may account in some measure for the lack of even the pretence of reasoning on the point in the writings of theologians. The so-called federal system of theology, which has now fallen into general and just discredit, appears to be the only system that really faces the present problem. The covenant idea, as we have seen, lies at the basis of the imputation of Adam's first sin. The act of imputation, with the conferring of the penalty, is supposed to take place as soon as each man comes into the world; and this agreeably to the terms of an imaginary covenant between God and Adam, whereby the latter became bound on behalf of all his posterity to render perfect obedience, on pain of death. In like manner, according to the federal system, a covenant

was made between God and Christ, whereby the latter became bound on behalf of all the elect to discharge the penalty due to their sin. In pursuance of the terms of this imaginary covenant, the sins of all the elect were imputed to their Covenant Head the moment He assumed human flesh, the penalty of those sins being then conferred, and visited on Him in due course. Let us see what such a theory involves.

The first sin of Adam was and is a definite past act from the standpoint of all his descendants, and there is no special difficulty in the way of supposing it imputed to them—no difficulty, I mean, which is not involved in the very idea of imputation. The penalty due to that sin is also sufficiently definite. It is death in the fullest and widest sense. “The wages of sin is death.” In the words of the Westminster Catechism, “Every sin deserveth God’s wrath and curse, both in this life and that which is to come.” However harsh these words may sound in modern ears, there is no good reason to think that they overstate the teaching of Scripture. Sin, from its very nature, and irrespective of its amount, must necessitate eternal separation from God, which means eternal misery. Such being the case, it is very difficult to understand what can be meant by saying that the penalties due to the sins of all the elect were conferred upon Christ at the time when He assumed human flesh, and borne by Him during the course of His earthly life. If the penalty of even a single sin be the eternal misery of the sinner, it is impossible to see what meaning there is in the statement that the penalty or penalties due to innumerable sins of innumerable persons were borne by a single individual within a brief period of time. If the penalty of even a single sin be infinite, what good is there in talking about the aggregate penalties of innumerable sins? The penalty of even an infinite number of sins can in no respect differ from the penalty of one, if the penalty of that one be infinite. The present theory would be more feasible and intelligible if the first sin of Adam, after being imputed to each individual of the elect, were again imputed back to Christ, so that its penalty might fall upon Him instead of falling upon them, no account whatever being taken of the inherited and actual sin belonging to the elect.

But even then there would be a serious difficulty. How can an infinite amount of suffering be borne by a single individual within a limited and even a brief period of time? If the earthly life of Christ had been prolonged a year longer, would not His sufferings have been greater? If He had suffered more during the first thirty years of His life, as He might very well have done, would not His sufferings have been greater? Even at the final close, what evidence is there that the sufferings of Christ were or could be so inconceivably great as is here presupposed?

Possibly it will be said that the sufferings of Christ were not infinite in amount; they were not, therefore, the full penalty of even a single sin, much less (if the language be permissible) of the aggregate sins of all the elect; only, such as they were, they were accepted by God in lieu of the full penalty; they served the same purpose in reference to the Divine justice as the full penalty would have done. But if the Divine justice can be satisfied with something less than the full penalty, who shall define to us how much less? There is little use any longer in talking of the sins of all the elect being imputed to Christ, meaning that the penalty due to those sins is conferred upon Christ to be borne by Him, if Christ did not bear the full penalty of even a single sin, but merely endured sufferings whose amount no one can define. To speak, under these circumstances, of imputing certain sins, and bearing the penalty due to those sins, can serve no other purpose than to mislead. If the amount of Christ's sufferings cannot be determined *à priori*, it must be determined historically by the unsophisticated perusal of the Gospel narratives; that is to say, the sufferings of Christ must just be of that kind and degree which the Gospel narratives record. Now, it need not be said that this is quite compatible with the idea that the sufferings of Christ were not greater than those of Peter, or Paul, or any other Christian martyr. And if the sufferings of Christ were not determinately greater than those of His followers, why should they be supposed to be different in kind, or intended to serve a different purpose? Whilst if they were of the same kind, and intended to serve the same purpose, how is it possible to pretend that the sins of all the elect were



imputed to Christ, and not rather that they are imputed to the elect themselves?—I speak at present merely of the requirements of theory, not of the evidence of Scripture, which will be dealt with at a later stage.

But, again, it may be urged that the sufferings of Christ, though not infinite in amount, were nevertheless infinite in value, in consequence of the Divine dignity of His person. This is the favourite modern idea; the other, which represents the sufferings of Christ as infinite in amount, is now generally abandoned. As regards difficulty or the avoidance of difficulty, there is really very little to choose between the two. If the former idea required that the sufferings of Christ should be indefinitely greater than they appear to have been, the present idea admits of their being indefinitely less than they appear to have been. In seeking to escape Scylla, it falls into Charybdis. In striving to obviate the difficulty arising from the brief duration and apparently small amount of Christ's sufferings, the infinite value theory passes to the opposite extreme, and wears the aspect of completely overshooting the mark. For, if the Divine dignity of Christ was capable of imparting infinite value to any finite degree of suffering, however great, it must have been capable of imparting infinite value to every finite degree of suffering, however small. That being so, it is not evident why Christ should have suffered so much as He is acknowledged on all hands to have done. Why should Christ have encountered the sufferings of a life-time, including the agonies of Gethsemane and the Cross of shame, if a single moment of suffering would have sufficed to meet all the requirements of the case? There is a still graver objection behind. The experience of Christ while on earth had confessedly two sides, which may be distinguished in thought, though they were inseparable in fact, and which are usually spoken of as His obedience and sufferings, or His active and passive obedience. Not only are these two equally related to the person of Christ, but they interpenetrate one another in such a manner as to render it utterly impossible that infinite value should be communicated to the one, without being at the same time communicated to the other. If the Divine dignity of Christ imparted infinite value to His sufferings, it must at the same time have imparted

infinite value to His obedience. There is, indeed, no evidence, either in reason or Scripture, to support the idea that the obedience of Christ was of infinite intrinsic merit, that it rose infinitely above the requirement of the law ;—such an idea is perfectly absurd—but there is just as little evidence, either in reason or Scripture, to support the idea that the sufferings of Christ were of infinite intrinsic merit, that they yielded to the law infinitely greater satisfaction than the sufferings of ordinary human beings, that the death of Christ was death in an infinitely deeper sense than the death of ordinary men is death. The latter idea is a pure fabrication, conjured into existence to meet the requirements of theory, and destitute of the smallest authority. We are therefore entitled to judge it upon its own intrinsic—that is, its theoretical—merits. And we can see already that, as a theory, it raises even greater difficulties than those which it seeks to obviate. For, according to it, the obedience of Christ must be infinitely meritorious ; and, by another part of the same theory, this infinitely meritorious obedience must be imputed to each individual believer, along with the corresponding infinitely meritorious sufferings ; so that each believer must be possessed of infinite merit in the sight of God, and must be entitled to an infinite reward. This would imply, not only that the merit of all believers is equal, being the greatest possible, but that the glory received by each is equally and infinitely great ; both which points are absolutely opposed to Scripture. As a matter of plain and indisputable fact, the obedience or righteousness of Christ, being simply righteousness, which means correspondence to law, not infinite transcendence of law, cannot possibly have been of infinite value. That Christ perfectly obeyed the law is admitted ; and if we deny that He did anything more, that is because more than perfect obedience is an impossibility—ay, an utter absurdity. It follows that the sufferings of Christ must, like His obedience, have been of precisely the same value in the eye of the law as those of any other man—that is to say, they cannot have been, as the theory requires that they should have been, of infinite value.

However, we shall pass over these difficulties as if they had no existence. We shall assume that the sins of all the elect

were imputed to Christ in terms of a covenant between Christ and God, and that the penalty due to all those sins was fully discharged by Christ, inasmuch as His sufferings, though not infinite in amount, were rendered of infinite value by the Divine dignity of His person. Assuming these things, there is no question that this case differs widely from the case of Paul and Onesimus. For, again, strange as the assertion may sound, there is here no real transference of the penalty. The sins of the elect did not cease to be imputed to them when they are alleged to have been imputed to Christ, nor did the penalty cease to lie upon them in consequence of having been laid upon Him. The imputation to Christ of the sins of the elect, whether a fact or merely a figment, produced no effect whatever on the state or standing of those from whom the imputation is said to have been made ; their sins and penalties remain precisely as they were before—at least, until another quite distinct imputation takes place. In fact, a great part of the sins supposed to have been imputed to Christ were not even committed at the time when the imputation took place ; it is therefore quite impossible that their penalties should have been *transferred* to Christ, since the penalties in question had not then been incurred by the parties from whom the transference should have been made. This is a point in which the case of Christ and the elect differs entirely from the case of Adam and his posterity. The first sin of Adam was a past act, whose penalty could be conferred on each of his descendants while it lay or had lain on himself ; whereas the sins of the elect were in great part future acts, whose penalties had not yet been incurred at the time when they are supposed to have lain upon Christ. It is even implied that the first sin of Adam was imputed back from the post-Christian elect to Christ before it had been imputed forward to the post-Christian posterity of Adam themselves, the penalty of that sin being laid upon Christ before it had yet been laid upon those—some of those—on whose behalf Christ is alleged to have borne it. Such things may be quite possible in the Divine procedure, which cannot be supposed to take much account of the element of time ; but, to say the least, they would require to be very stringently proved. God may be quite able to foresee every

sinful act that every one of the elect will commit ; and these prospective sinful acts may have been all imputed to Christ, their appropriate penalties being borne by Him ; but to an unsophisticated mind all this is apt to appear just a little fantastic, and to stand very much in need of extraordinary rather than ordinary evidence to support it.

And this is not all. If the sins of the post-Christian elect had not yet come into existence when imputation to Christ was made, the sins of the pre-Christian elect had already passed out of existence—that is, they had been remitted. That the process of remission cannot possibly be identical with the process of imputation to Christ does not require to be said. The remission of sins is a process that goes on more or less during the whole lifetime of each believer, and has nothing whatever to do with the imputation that is supposed to have taken place at the moment when Christ assumed human flesh. The sins of post-Christian believers could not possibly be remitted then ; the sins of pre-Christian believers must have been already remitted ; and there is every reason to believe that they were remitted in exactly the same way, and on exactly the same conditions, as our sins are remitted now. Whether the sufferings of believers during their life on earth are to be regarded as part of the penalty or wages of their sins, and whether that part of the penalty which is not inflicted is remitted in the most absolute sense, both these points will fall to be discussed in the sequel. What I wish to point out now is, that the penalty of believers' sins cannot have been really *transferred* to Christ as the penalty of Onesimus's wrong-doing was transferred to Paul. At the most, a penalty can only have been *conferred* upon Christ equivalent to that which the whole body of the elect should have borne.

Again, it is not here, as in the case of Onesimus, a case of transferring the penalty incurred by a single individual to another single individual, nor yet, as in the case of Adam, a case of conferring the penalty incurred by a single individual on each of an indefinite number of individuals, but, conversely, it is a case of conferring the penalties incurred by an indefinite number of individuals on a single individual, to be borne by him alone. Further, just as in the case of Paul, though not



as in the case of Adam's descendants, the penalty is here conferred with the concurrence of the party suffering. Once more, precisely as in the case of Adam's descendants, but not as in the case of Paul, there accompanies, or rather precedes, the supposed conferring of the penalty, the actual and certain conferring of a state of character which, from all that appears, would have entailed the endurance of the penalty whether the sins of men had been imputed or no. As this last point may appear somewhat more doubtful than the others, it will require to be considered with some care.

It is commonly taken for granted by theological writers that, though Christ was born of a woman, the human nature or flesh which He received was as completely different from that of the woman from whom he received it, as if, being formed directly and independently by the hand of God, it had not been derived from the woman at all; they assume, in fact, that the flesh of Christ was identical in nature, not (as it is said to have been) with that of Mary (Gal. iv. 4; *cf.* John iii. 6), of the seed of David (Rom. i. 3), of the seed of Abraham (Heb. ii. 14-16), of all the descendants of Adam (1 Cor. xv. 22), including, according to one view, Adam himself as originally created (v. 45), but with that of Adam *before his fall*. And this surely is a very violent assumption to make. We may find somewhat strong reason to doubt by-and-by whether there ever was a Fall—that is, whether the human constitution ever was different from what it is now. But, granting that it was, there is still difficulty enough in accepting the notion that the flesh of *Christ* was unfallen, or, if that be preferred, sinless. For, though we are not very fully acquainted with the nature of Adam's physical constitution while yet unfallen, yet, if the statements of Scripture are to be taken in their plain and obvious sense, one or two things must be held to be certain. It was not subject to decay, disease, and death. It was, therefore, something altogether different from our flesh now, and from everything of which we have any experience or idea. If not in the glorified state, it must at least have had much more affinity with that state than with any other, seeing it was fitted to live for ever. If the story of the Fall be accepted as veritable and literal history, nothing can be

more certain than that death entered the world through sin, and that before sin there was not and could not be death. It is also certain that in Adam—which means in Adam's nature as at present constituted, descended from Adam, born of woman—all die (1 Cor. xv. 22). And, further, it is certain that Christ was in Adam, that He was descended from David, from Abraham, from Adam, through a long series of ancestors, that He was born of woman, and that, in consequence of being so born, He died. It is even said that He became a sharer of flesh and blood—of “the same” flesh and blood which His brethren share—that flesh and blood which cannot inherit the Kingdom of God because corruption cannot inherit incorruption—in order that [*He might pass*] *through death* (Heb. ii. 14). How, then, can it possibly be pretended that the flesh of Christ was identical in nature with Adam's flesh *before he fell*, whose special characteristic it was *not* to be subject to corruption, decay, and death, and not identical in nature with human flesh *as it now exists*, whose special characteristic it is to *be* subject to corruption, decay, and death?

Possibly it may be thought that, because Christ was born of God, born of the Spirit, born from above, at the same time that He was born of the Virgin, therefore His flesh must have been at once spiritualised and glorified; for it may be thought that God either could not or would not dwell in flesh that was not absolutely free from the taint of sin. But that such an assumption is wholly unwarranted is proved by the case of every believer. The flesh of believers is not *at once* spiritualised and glorified when they are born of God, born of the Spirit, born from above. The indwelling of the Spirit does indeed afford a pledge that the “body of humiliation” will be ultimately transformed into a “body of glory,” and the inworking of the Spirit is the agency by which the transformation is effected. But, neither in the case of Christ, nor in that of believers, is the transformation accomplished at once, or without passing through death. The fact that Christ was born of the Spirit affords no proof that His flesh was identical in nature with the Spirit to which it was united, and not identical in nature with the flesh of the Virgin from whom it was derived—at least if there be truth in what He

Himself said, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit" (John iii. 6). The fact that He passed through death affords what I must regard as an absolute demonstration to the contrary. Had the flesh of Christ been other than ordinary human flesh, it could not possibly have crumbled and decayed and died—such at least is the conclusion to which *all* the indications of Scripture point—as, conversely, being ordinary human flesh, it could not but crumble and decay and die. Christ had a body of humiliation that needed to be transformed by passing through death before it could become a body of glory, just as every believer has a body of humiliation that needs to be transformed by passing through death before it can become a body of glory (Phil. iii. 21). What is this process of transformation from the state of humiliation to the state of glorification? It is just the process of sanctification, the process of purging from sin with all its effects, the process of renewal after the Divine image, the process of spiritualisation, of which the crowning stage is glorification, and which is accomplished throughout by "the Lord, the Spirit"—that is, by Christ as dwelling and working in the body of each believer through His Spirit, in like manner as He dwelt and wrought in His own body through His Spirit (2 Cor. iii. 17, 18). How then is it possible to doubt that, when Christ humbled Himself, taking the form of a slave, being made in the likeness of men, He did so by assuming the nature of man as he at present exists, *in the state of slavery and humiliation*? Every kind of evidence, as will be shown at length hereafter, concurs in rendering the same answer to this question. We have, for example, the evidence of sense, the testimony of the eye witnesses. There is nowhere the remotest indication in the Gospel history that the flesh of Christ differed in any respect from that of ordinary men; rather, the opposite is everywhere implied. What theologians say as to the natural weakness of Christ's humanity being "sinless infirmity" is a mere subterfuge, and a very poor one; a "sinless infirmity"—if by that is meant an infirmity that does not owe its origin and existence to sin—would have appeared to the writers of Scripture very much in the light of a contradiction in terms.

The distinction between infirmities that are connected with sin and infirmities that are not connected with sin, is a distinction coined *for the express purpose* of proving that the infirmities of Christ were not connected with sin; but, of course, it does nothing more than beg the question at issue. I shall undertake to prove that black is white, if I am allowed to coin a distinction between albine blackness and nigrine blackness, for the express purpose of carrying my point. According to the New Testament writers, infirmity is the very *note* of fallen human nature as such. Infirmity is the immediate effect of sin, and is possible only in connection with sin. The note of absolute holiness and spirituality is not weakness (*ασθένεια*) but power (*δύναμις*). And this explains the Apostle's language when he says that Jesus "was crucified *in consequence of weakness*, but liveth *in consequence of the power of God*" (2 Cor. xiii. 4)—words which are in turn explained by the statement that, "if Christ is in you, the body is dead *because of sin*, but the Spirit is life *because of righteousness*" (Rom. viii. 10).

The allegations of theologians on this matter, besides being unwarranted by Scripture, are so thoroughly capricious and inconsistent, when viewed merely in themselves, as to be without the smallest title to respect, and to stand self-condemned. It is affirmed that the first sin of Adam is imputed to all his posterity, and that by way of penalty all men derive from Adam a corrupted nature; yet, though Christ was confessedly descended from Adam, it is denied that the first sin of Adam was imputed to Him; and no reason whatever is assigned, nor can any be conceived, for the denial. More than that: while it is denied that the first sin of Adam was *directly* imputed to Christ in virtue of His descent from Adam, it is still affirmed that, not only that sin, but all the inherited and actual sins of all the elect are imputed to Christ; and yet the penalty of receiving a corrupted nature, together with death as its inseparable concomitant—one might say, its proper and peculiar development—does *not* follow the imputation of these innumerable sins! How can any one be expected to believe allegations so utterly *unprincipled*?

That the flesh of Christ was just the ordinary flesh of



fallen humanity, and not sinless, unfallen, or glorified flesh, is everywhere implied, and often expressly stated in the New Testament. The evidence will be brought out in detail in the course of this work. At present, I must content myself with pointing out that whoever asserts that the flesh of Christ was other than ordinary human flesh, as it now exists under the conditions produced by the Fall—assuming that there was a fall—whoever denies that it was identical in nature with the flesh of the Virgin from whom it was derived, or with that of the race among whom He appeared, and to whom He is said to have been in all points assimilated—whoever asserts the one thing, or denies the other, is under obligation to prove his position; the *onus probandi* lies upon him, not upon me. Every antecedent consideration is in favour of the opposite opinion, the truth of which might almost be regarded as self-evident, and which at any rate ought to be here accepted until clear disproof is forthcoming.

But even without insisting, in the meantime, that the flesh of Christ was fallen, or, if you please, sinful flesh, enough will still remain by the concessions of theologians themselves to afford a basis for my present argument. For it is generally admitted, indeed, it cannot be denied, by “orthodox” theologians, that Christ was “compassed with infirmity”—as they, though not the New Testament writers, would say, “*sinless* infirmity.” In other words, Christ was naturally subject to disease, decay, and death. Now, if Christ would have suffered and died whether human sin had been imputed to Him or no, if suffering and death were necessary to and inseparable from the nature which He assumed at the incarnation, with what show of reason can it be alleged that the imputation of human sin was an essential condition of the death of Christ? If the flesh which Christ became was so constituted that weakness, suffering, and death were inevitable after He had become it, then the death of Christ cannot have been due *exclusively* to the sins of the elect imputed. Indeed, it is not easy to see how it can have been due to that cause at all. For if, as is admitted, Christ assumed human flesh for the express purpose of passing through death, how strange were it that His death should be a necessity of nature produced by the incarnation,

and yet should be a penal infliction on account of sins imputed to Him *after* the incarnation ! Such it must have been ; for it is not alleged that the flesh of Christ was changed in consequence of the imputation of human sin, least of all that it was corrupted or subjected to sin, and through sin to death, as a punishment for sins imputed to Him *before* He became incarnate. The above view is, however, so extravagant that no one, I suppose, will be found deliberately to defend it. The idea is, that the death of Christ was due to one cause, and one only ; and therefore, I apprehend, that one cause must be allowed to be the fact of the incarnation itself, the nature of the flesh which He assumed. And, since we are assured that death is impossible apart from sin, and that all other men die because they inherit from Adam a sinful nature, does not this amount to a demonstration that Christ also died because He inherited from Adam a sinful nature—in other words, that the flesh of Christ was sinful flesh ? If it be said that Christ would not have suffered so much during His life, and at His death, unless the sins of the elect had been imputed to Him, it may be replied that theologians know as little as I do how much Christ actually suffered, and that, even if they did, they would still be unable to tell how much He would have suffered in case the sins of the elect had not been imputed to Him ; not to mention that, if Christ's sufferings were rendered of infinite value by the Divine dignity of His person, their amount is of less consequence. Those who attribute infinite, or at least inconceivable agonies to Christ, do so on their own responsibility. I know of no reason for supposing that the sufferings of Christ were greater than those of at least some of His followers ; and therefore I know of no reason for supposing that the sins of all the elect were imputed to Him any more than to each of them.

Thus we may sum up the differences between the second alleged case of imputation and the typical case originally proposed. (1.) There is no real transference of the penalty from one person to another. (2.) Nor is the penalty conferred on one person with another. (3.) It is conferred on one person with an indefinite number of others, who each bear it in their measure. (4.) There accompanies, or rather precedes,

the supposed conferring of the penalty, the actual and certain conferring of a state of character which makes the endurance of the penalty a natural necessity, a fact which renders it approximately—may I not say absolutely?—certain that the penalty was not really conferred at all.

We proceed to consider the third and last case of imputation, in which the righteousness of Christ is said to be imputed to each individual believer. By the righteousness of Christ is meant His whole earthly experience, everything that He felt, did, and suffered from the first moment of the incarnation to the moment when He expired on the Cross; otherwise expressed, the righteousness of Christ is His obedience and sufferings, or His active and passive obedience. This, it must be allowed, is a somewhat curious meaning to put upon the word *righteousness*. In ordinary speech, that word describes a state of character—*i.e.*, of heart and life, of inward disposition and outward action—corresponding to the Divine law. It is an abstract term connoting the attributes common to all characters answering to the requirements of the Divine law, including especially the Divine character itself. In saying “I am righteous,” I affirm that my character is in the state of conformity with the standard of moral rectitude, which is the Divine law. In saying “God is righteous,” I affirm the same thing concerning God—that His character answers, corresponds, or conforms to the requirements of His law. The word righteous in these two cases does not bear two different meanings, but one and the same. Righteousness is an *abstract* term, and it lies in the very nature of an abstract term to connote what is common to *all* the concrete persons or things of which it can be predicated; universal sameness is the very essence of abstractness. Now, it need not be said that suffering or death forms no part of the notion of righteousness as predicated of the Divine character. The Divine nature is even incapable of suffering and dying, just as, and just because, it is incapable of sinning. There is no precept of the law demanding the endurance of suffering and death, nor, consequently, is the endurance of suffering and death essential to perfect fulfilment of the law—that is, to righteousness. On the contrary, the presence of suffering and death is a certain

proof of the presence of sin ; it is therefore a proof that the law has *not* been perfectly fulfilled, but rather infringed and violated. Such being the case, it appears the strangest thing in the world to affirm that the endurance of suffering and death forms part of the notion of righteousness, or, which is the same thing, of perfect fulfilment of the law. The law threatens the penalty of death to the disobedient or unrighteous ; it promises the reward of life to the obedient or righteous ; and, therefore, to say that the endurance of the penalty of death for a certain limited time forms part of the notion of righteousness is neither more nor less absurd than to say that the enjoyment of the reward of life for a certain limited time forms part of the notion of unrighteousness ; though certainly, if we are to distinguish between degrees of absurdity, both these things are much more absurd than to say either that the endurance of the penalty of death for a limited period forms part of the notion of unrighteousness, or that the enjoyment of the reward of life for a limited period forms part of the notion of righteousness.

We have said that by the righteousness of Christ is meant His whole earthly experience, everything that He felt, did, and suffered while on earth ; alternatively, we have spoken of His active and passive obedience as that which is imagined to be imputed to believers ; and these modes of expression are borrowed from theologians. But, in reality, unless I am much mistaken, neither of the two forms of statement or definition can be defended as accurate, even from the standpoint of those who use them. To look at the last first. The "passive obedience" of Christ is another name for the pain, the suffering, the death which He endured at the hands of the law. But pain, suffering, or death is not obedience ; in normal circumstances it does not even accompany obedience. Pain, like pleasure, is a reflex attending some mode of activity, and in normal circumstances the mode of activity which pain attends is not obedience, but disobedience. The law nowhere lays upon men a command to suffer and die ; on the contrary, it says, "*Do this and thou shalt live.*" Suffering and death are so far from being necessarily bound up with obedience to the law, that they are actually inseparably bound up with



disobedience to it; they constitute the penalty which the law threatens against sin, and are possible only in connection with sin. The lost in the pit of woe suffer and die: do they on that account obey the law? On the contrary, their attitude is one of persistent, inveterate, incorrigible disobedience. The redeemed in heaven rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: do they on that account fail to obey the law? On the contrary, they obey it and shall obey it, constantly, perfectly, eternally. The suffering of Christ was not a form of His obedience, nor yet a reflex attending His obedience, but rather it was a reflex attending the sin or disobedience which had become His. The expression "passive obedience" as applied to the sufferings of Christ is, therefore, wholly inappropriate. Indeed, "passive obedience" would be far more suitable, or rather far less unsuitable, to describe the enjoyment which attended the obedience of Christ while on earth, than to describe the suffering which attended His sin or disobedience. Again, to look at the other expression used. The righteousness of Christ is spoken of as identical with His whole earthly experience, His combined activity and passivity, all that He did on the one hand and felt on the other, during the time that He sojourned upon earth. But, while this is asserted in general, those who do so seem not to be aware how much the assertion involves. For, while much is everywhere said as to the pain, the sorrow, the suffering, the death which Christ experienced during His earthly existence, nothing whatever is said as to the joy, the comfort, the peace, the blessedness, the life in fellowship with God which He experienced during the same period. Yet, surely no one will pretend, on reflection, that the earthly life of Christ was one of unmitigated pain and misery from beginning to end. We have already found some reason to think that the sufferings of Christ did not appreciably exceed those of at least some of His followers, and there is, I imagine, equally good reason to think that His enjoyments did not appreciably fall below those of at least some of His followers; nay, one may put it even more strongly, and say that there is at least as good reason to think that the enjoyments of Christ rose above those of His followers as there is to think that His sufferings did so. Why, then, are not these enjoyments said

to be imputed to believers along with the sufferings? What right has any one to cut and carve among the reflex feelings of Christ, and say that while this forms part of His righteousness, that does not form part of His righteousness at all? Above all, what right has any one to say that the reflex feelings proper to disobedience, or unrighteousness, form part of the righteousness of Christ, while the reflex feelings proper to obedience, or righteousness, do *not* form part of the righteousness of Christ?

But further. The obedience which lay behind the joy, and peace, and life of Christ while on earth is said to be imputed to believers; the joy, and peace, and life themselves are not said to be imputed. On the other hand, the pain, the suffering, the death of Christ while on earth are said to be imputed to believers; the sin which lay behind the pain, and suffering, and death is not said to be imputed. And hence arises a curious, not to say monstrous, incongruity. The sufferings of Christ are supposed to have constituted the aggregate penalty of all the sins of all the elect, having been proportioned, if not in amount, at least in value to this all but infinite multitude of sins. Yet, though it is implicitly denied that the sins of each believer are at all proportioned to the sufferings of Christ, and though it is not alleged that all the sins of all the elect are imputed from Christ to each believer,—notwithstanding this, it is explicitly affirmed that the whole of the infinitely meritorious sufferings of Christ, constituting as they do the penalty of all the sins of all the elect, are imputed to *each individual believer*! Again, the infinite dignity of Christ's person was that which imparted infinite value to His sufferings, and this same infinite dignity must at the same time have imparted infinite value to His obedience, and to the blessedness which He enjoyed as the fruit of His obedience. Now, this infinitely meritorious obedience of Christ might be supposed to suffice as a substitute for the finite obedience of all the elect, while it should entitle whoever possessed it to the reward of infinite blessedness. Yet, though it is not and cannot be pretended that the believer enjoys perfect blessedness up to his measure while on earth, much less an infinite measure of blessedness; and though it is not alleged that the

infinitely meritorious blessedness of Christ is imputed to each believer : all the same it is affirmed that the whole of the infinitely meritorious obedience of Christ is imputed to *each individual believer* ! How very capricious and inconsistent is it, after imputing one half of the experiences of Christ to the believer, not to impute also the other half, when no reason whatever can be assigned for declining to do so, and when such absurd incongruities are the result ! If it be said that the believer while on earth, possessing as he does a degree of sin of his own, does not require the infinite imputed sin of Christ, it may be replied that the believer while on earth, possessing as he does a degree of suffering of his own, does not require the infinite imputed suffering of Christ. And again, if it be said that the believer while on earth, possessing as he does a degree of blessedness of his own, does not require the infinite imputed blessedness of Christ, it may be replied that the believer while on earth, possessing as he does a degree of obedience of his own, does not require the infinite imputed obedience of Christ. Surely, if men are to apply imputation from Christ to the believer at all, they ought to go through with it. If there be no difficulty in the way of imputing the miseries of hell from the one to the other, there ought to be very little in the way of imputing the joys of heaven ; and then the believer, even if he should fail to reach heaven in fact, may well comfort himself to all eternity with the reflection that he is enjoying it by imputation.

Something might perhaps be said in favour of separating the obedience of Christ from the enjoyments, the sufferings, and the sins, calling the obedience by the name of righteousness, and then imputing it to each believer. But even so, there would be a grave difficulty. Christ did not cease to obey the law when His earthly course was completed. He certainly ceased to have any connection with sin ; and so, ceasing to *disobey* the law, He ceased to be under its curse or penalty. But He was so far from ceasing to obey it, that on the contrary He now, for the first time since the incarnation, obeyed it perfectly in His whole being. The difference between the first and the second manifestation of Christ is not that the first time He was manifested to obey the law, the second time

He shall be manifested not to obey it ; rather, the difference is that the first time He was manifested in connection with sin—that is, while in some sort disobeying the law—the second time He shall be manifested “apart from sin”—that is, while obeying the law perfectly in His whole being. In these circumstances, it appears singular that the period during which Christ lay under the penalty of the law on account of sin should be selected as the period during which He wrought out a perfect righteousness, or a perfect fulfilment of the law. Any period during the whole history of Christ, whether before or after the incarnation, would seem to be better suited for such a purpose. Besides, the whole notion of working out “a righteousness” during a limited period of time savours very much of absurdity. Righteousness is an attribute or quality of moral character ; it is an abstraction, having no concrete existence—just as much so as whiteness, evenness, rotundity, sinfulness, docility, obtuseness, &c. We never speak of working out a whiteness, or a docility, or a sinfulness ; no more ought we to speak of working out a righteousness. The only intelligible sense in which a man can be said to work out either a sinfulness or a righteousness is when he works himself out of a sinful state into a righteous state, or *vice versâ*. In this sense, if you please, Jesus worked out for Himself a righteousness. In this sense, also, each believer, assisted by the Spirit of God, works out for himself a righteousness. But this is not the sense in which the expression is used by theologians. They mean by it something corresponding to the enduring of the penalty of the law—an idea which it cannot possibly be, or at least never is, used to convey. It may be all very well to speak of enduring the penalty of the law within a limited period of time, as long as that penalty is supposed to be limited ; but the counterpart of enduring the penalty of the law on account of sin is not the working out of a righteousness, but the enjoying of the reward of the law on account of righteousness ; and this reward, if it is to be enjoyed within a limited period of time, must likewise be limited. Thus, that Christ, by obeying the law during the period of His earthly life, worked out a righteousness, which is imputed to each individual believer



so as to become his righteousness, is an idea that appears on examination to involve a grave absurdity.

However, as these difficulties, if we were to pursue them, might be found to be almost endless, we shall pass them over, and proceed, as on a former occasion, to define more exactly the present phase of the theory of imputation. Taking our cue from the ablest exponents of the theory, we shall assume that, agreeably to the terms of the covenant of redemption between God and Christ, the righteousness of Christ is imputed to each believer the moment he first believes, meaning by the righteousness of Christ the aggregate of His obedience and sufferings from the first moment of the incarnation to the moment when He expired on the Cross. We shall assume that this righteousness of Christ is a perfect righteousness; that, once it has come into the possession of the believer, it continues in his possession ever after; that he is put by it absolutely at quits with the law, both as regards past entanglements and present standing; and that he is henceforth regarded and treated by God as if he were perfectly righteous. How will this case, so understood, quadrate with the case of Paul and Onesimus?

The debitum is here no longer a penalty but a reward: or rather, it ought to be a reward, if the thing imputed were properly and only righteousness; but, as the thing imputed is a combination of obedience or righteousness and sufferings, so the debitum is a combination of a reward and the cancelling of a penalty. The reward which the law promises to obedience is life, just as the penalty which it threatens to sin is death; and hence, a debitum which comprehends at once the reward and the cancelling of the penalty, must comprehend at once the communication of life and the removal of death. Now the question is—Is this debitum really transferred from Christ to each believer in the first moment of faith? Is it even conferred on each believer with Christ in the first moment of faith? No one can possibly pretend, in the face of indisputable and acknowledged facts, that either the one half or the other of the debitum is either transferred from Christ to each believer, or conferred on each believer with Christ, in the first moment of faith. Let us look at the two parts of the debitum separately, and at the last first.

We saw under a previous head that the sufferings and death of Christ were the penalty inflicted on account of the imputed sins of all the elect, and that this penalty could not have been *transferred* from the elect to Christ as the penalty of Onesimus was transferred to Paul, since in that case the elect would never have lain under the penalty, nor have been subject to suffering and death at all. Indeed, if the penalty of the elect had been really transferred to Christ as the penalty of Onesimus was to Paul, no counter act of imputation would have been required in the former case any more than in the latter—none at anyrate in connection with this part of the debitum. The effect of real transference of the penalty would have been that the elect, as soon as they entered the world, would have found themselves in the heavenly state, or at least in a state identical with that of Adam before he fell, when death had not yet entered the world through sin. Real transference of the penalty would have been equivalent to strict substitution, and strict substitution would imply that the penalty of the elect's sins fell entirely on Christ, and not at all on the elect themselves, just as the penalty of Onesimus's wrong-doing fell entirely on Paul, and not at all on Onesimus himself. Now, in the very fact that the penalty was not really transferred from the elect to Christ, it is implied that the immunity from the penalty which Christ obtained after His resurrection cannot be really *transferred* from Christ to each believer in the first moment of faith. For, if Christ's immunity from death—including under that term the sum total of the consequences of His imputed sin—were really transferred to any one believer, it could not remain to be really transferred to any other; and, besides, if the entire merit of the sufferings and death which nullified the imputed sin of Christ were really transferred from Christ at all, He would again find Himself in the position which He occupied before that merit had become His, in other words, He would again be subject to His imputed sin with all its consequences. If the sufferings and death of Christ were needed by Christ Himself for the purpose of nullifying His imputed sin, their effect cannot be really transferred to each believer for the purpose of nullifying his personal sin. The immunity from death, as the penalty

of the imputed sins of all the elect, which Christ has enjoyed since the resurrection, is the fruit of His previous endurance of death ; and this fruit cannot be taken away without reducing Him to the position which He occupied before it had become His. Hence, it is quite impossible that immunity from death, the penalty of sin, should be *transferred* from Christ to each believer in the first moment of faith.

But, further, if immunity from death cannot be transferred from Christ to each believer in the first moment of faith, neither, on the other hand, is it *conferred* on each believer with Christ in the first moment of faith. For, to suppose this, would be to suppose that each believer in the first moment of faith is translated to heaven, where he is treated exactly as Christ was treated after He rose from the dead ; or, if not this, it would be to suppose that each believer in the first moment of faith passes into a state identical with that of Adam before his fall, when death had not yet entered the world through sin. If immunity from suffering and death were conferred on each believer in the first moment of faith, then from that moment each believer would be free from suffering and death. But as a matter of acknowledged fact, the believer during his life on earth is not free from suffering and death. On the contrary, he is beset continually by suffering and death. He enters the kingdom of heaven “through much tribulation.” He suffers with Christ that he may *ultimately* be glorified and reign with Christ. And, therefore, the above supposition is directly opposed to experience as well as to Scripture. Indeed, so far are believers in the present world from being treated as Christ was treated after He rose from the dead, that, on the contrary, they are treated exactly as Christ was treated *during His life on earth*, when the penalty of sin was lying upon Him. And it is really hard to see how it could possibly be otherwise. Absolute immunity from suffering and death ! How utterly impossible is such a thing, except as conditioned by absolute immunity from sin ! The continued reign of sin carries with it the continued reign of death, naturally and inevitably ; the one can be destroyed or brought to nought only with the destruction of the other. The believer is com-

pletely delivered from the penalty of sin only when he is completely delivered from sin itself, which he is at the moment of death,—neither sooner nor later,—the moment at which Christ also was delivered.

Again, to look at the other part of the debitum. The reward due to perfect obedience or perfect righteousness is perfect life ; in other words, it is heaven in all its fulness, the state into which Jesus entered after His resurrection, and into which believers shall enter with Christ after their resurrection. Can this be really *transferred* from Christ to each believer in the first moment of faith ? Theologians appear at times to think that it can, particularly when they assert that the obedience of Christ “was not due for Himself,” that, not being under obligation to obey the law by nature, He voluntarily came under obligation to obey it instead of His people, and that, consequently, the reward of His obedience is free to be transferred from Him to them. How this obligation to obey the law came to be laid upon Christ is not quite evident. Nor is it quite easy to understand what is meant by saying that Christ’s obedience was not due for Himself, or that He was not originally under obligation to obey the law. It is certain that God perfectly obeys the law, that He is perfectly righteous, that He is perfectly holy, that He is the model or standard after which men are exhorted to be perfect (Matt. v. 48), to be righteous (Eph. iv. 24), to be holy (1 Pet. i. 15, 16). It is certain, also, that He enjoys the blessedness consequent on perfect obedience to the law. It is certain that Christ was God. It is certain that before the incarnation He obeyed the law perfectly, and enjoyed perfect blessedness. It is certain that since the resurrection He has obeyed the law perfectly in His whole being, and has enjoyed perfect blessedness. It is certain that the blessedness which believers enjoy in heaven is the reward of perfect obedience, and is identical in nature with the blessedness which Christ Himself enjoys.

Now, if Christ, before the incarnation and since the resurrection, has obeyed the law perfectly, and has enjoyed perfect life, the blessing or promise which the law attaches to perfect obedience, the only thing that can possibly be meant by saying that during the periods specified He was not under obligation



to obey the law, must be that, in case He had disobeyed it, the penalty of the law would not have been inflicted. But this is precisely what the facts of His earthly experience completely disprove. The experience of Christ while on earth proves to a demonstration that God Himself, if He is found sinful, no matter how, cannot escape the consequences. Besides, it is quite impossible in the nature of things that sin should be committed without being followed, *in some degree at least*, by the natural consequence, which is death. The penalty is to some extent involved in the very nature of sin, insomuch that the one cannot be conceived apart altogether from the other. Nor, indeed, can it well be imagined that any one will deliberately affirm the contrary. Yet it is strangely asserted that Christ was not under obligation to obey the law for Himself. The idea, I suppose, is that when Christ is said to have been "born of a woman, born under the law" (Gal. iv. 4), this means that by the fact of the incarnation He became obliged to obey the law, not having been obliged to obey it before. But it is plain from the context that what is meant is, that Christ, in being born of a woman, was born *under the penalty of the law on account of disobedience*, in like manner as all other men, in being born of woman, are born under the penalty of the law on account of disobedience. To be under the law in the Apostolic sense is not to be under obligation to obey the law,—all moral beings are that,—but to be under the penalty or curse of the law on account of disobedience; to be redeemed from under the law is not to be redeemed from under obligation to obey the law,—to moral beings that is impossible,—but to be redeemed from under the penalty or curse of the law on account of disobedience. The regenerated, renewed, adopted believer is as much under obligation to obey the law as any one else; he is free from the law only in the sense, and to the extent, that, being free from sin, he is free from the curse or penalty which the law threatens against sin. And so Christ, by dying to sin, redeemed Himself from under the law, and became, after the resurrection—though still under obligation to obey the law—free from its penalty or curse. I take it, therefore, to be absolutely certain that God and Christ, and every other moral being throughout the universe, is under

obligation to obey the law in the only sense in which the expression has any meaning—viz., in the sense that the penalty would be inflicted in case of disobedience. Such being the case, it is manifestly impossible that the reward of Christ's obedience should be *transferred* to believers in the first moment of faith.

But, indeed, it is difficult to understand how the reward of Christ's obedience could be really transferred, even on supposition that He was not under obligation to obey the law ; and, therefore, it is hard to see why theologians should have ever thought of insisting that the obedience of Christ was not due for Himself. For, if the reward of Christ's obedience were really transferred to any one believer in the first moment of faith, it would not remain to be really transferred to any other, and so one believer and one only would be saved ! Real transference of the debitum would imply strict substitution, and strict substitution would imply that one believer and one only occupies the place of Christ ; for it is not here pretended that the obedience of Christ was of infinite intrinsic value, and that its reward is divided piecemeal among the whole body of the elect : the caprice of theologians is too great for that !

Once more, not only is the reward of Christ's obedience not transferred to each believer in the first moment of faith, but, sure enough, it is not even *conferred* on each believer in the first moment of faith. For, as already said, to suppose this would be to suppose that each believer in the first moment of faith is translated to heaven, where he is treated exactly as Christ was treated after He rose from the dead ; whereas, in point of fact, the believer during his earthly life is treated exactly as Christ was treated *during His earthly life*. He is subjected to trial, persecution, suffering, death, for the kingdom of heaven's sake, exactly as Christ was. He is crucified *with Christ*, that is, as we shall show by-and-by, in a manner identical with that in which Christ was crucified. He takes up his cross daily and follows his Master. He is the after-runner of whom Jesus is the forerunner, the follower of whom Jesus is the leader, the servant of whom Jesus is the lord, the younger brother of whom Jesus is the elder brother. Plainly, if it be true that Jesus while on earth was "tried in all points

like as we are," it must likewise be true that we while on earth are tried in all points like as Jesus was. And if believers while on earth run the same race of trial, suffering, and death which Jesus ran while on earth, how can it possibly be alleged that they are already crowned with glory and honour as Jesus is "crowned with glory and honour" in heaven? What theologians say on this matter is either absolutely unintelligible or else it is absolutely contradictory and absolutely opposed to experience. The "crown of righteousness" (2 Tim. iv. 8)—the reward of perfect righteousness—is life in perfect fellowship with God. The believer, as long as he is on earth, is confessedly to some extent under the power of sin and death, that is, he has not yet attained to life in perfect fellowship with God—the "crown of righteousness." Yet the believer, it is said, is treated by God as if he were perfectly righteous! That the believer should be treated as if he were perfectly righteous while sin is still reigning within him is a manifest impossibility in the nature of things. The penalty in some degree of it is involved in the very existence of sin; death and sin are naturally and necessarily inseparable. God Himself, even if He wished, could not treat a sinful man as if he were perfectly righteous. And that, in actual experience, believers when still imperfect on earth are not treated as they will be when made perfect in heaven is as certain as anything can be; although it is equally certain that, if the allegations of theologians had any meaning, they ought to be so treated. If it be said that the believer while on earth possesses a double constitution, in virtue of which he can enjoy the life and favour and fellowship of God, and yet be subject to suffering and death, this may be quite true; but it was just as true of Christ while on earth as it is of any of His followers. And besides, it does not prove that either Christ or the believer is treated as if he were *perfectly* righteous. It merely proves that, in so far as they possess the image of God, they enjoy the life of God; in other words, that, in so far as they have been made righteous, they enjoy the reward of righteousness. This is in no way incompatible with the correlative position, that, in so far as they are still under sin, they are under the penalty of sin, which is death. Indeed, what distinguishes the case of

believers during their life on earth from the case of unbelievers is not the fact that they are treated better than they deserve,—which they would be if treated as perfectly righteous while still imperfectly righteous,—but that, as a rule, and *as compared with the ungodly*, they are treated much worse than they deserve. Believers, just because they are believers, are punished for their iniquities; they are judged and chastened by the Lord in the present life that they may not be condemned with the wicked in the life to come. In this life the ungodly receive their good things, and likewise the godly evil things; in the life beyond these will be comforted, while those will be tormented. “Now is the time when the judgment has begun at the house of God; and if it has begun first at us, what shall be the end of them that obey not the gospel of God?” (1 Pet. iv. 17.) This does not imply that all believers are punished equally, nor yet that each is punished in proportion to his sins; much less does it imply that all or any believers are punished up to the full measure of their deserts; but it does imply that, whereas the judgment and punishment of the ungodly is, for the most part, reserved for the future world, the judgment and punishment of the godly, in so far as they are judged and punished at all, takes place in the present world. And if that be so, if the sufferings of believers in the present life are judicial retributions on account of sin, just as really so as the sufferings of unbelievers in the life to come, then it is palpably absurd to affirm that the believer during his earthly life is regarded and treated by God as if he were perfectly righteous, or that the reward of Christ’s obedience is conferred on each believer in the first moment of faith, to continue in his possession ever after. At this point, therefore, the theory of imputation completely breaks down.

It remains to add that there accompanies, or rather precedes, the supposed conferring of the reward, the actual and certain creating of a state of character sufficient of itself to merit the reward, and which does as a matter of fact merit and receive the reward, in so far as it is merited or received either in this world or the next. No one, I suppose, will pretend that regeneration or renewal after the image of God is a reward conferred on the believer on account of the



imputed righteousness of Christ ; though, indeed, there is just as much ground for alleging that the inherent righteousness imparted in regeneration is the reward of imputed righteousness conferred previously, as there is for alleging that the inherent sinfulness imparted in generation is the penalty of imputed sin conferred previously. However, it is generally acknowledged and taught, that faith is a function of the renewed or regenerated soul, and that the imputation of Christ's righteousness follows instead of preceding faith ; from which it may be concluded that the imputation of Christ's righteousness is the consequence, and not the antecedent condition, of regeneration. Whether the righteousness of Christ is thought of as imputed solely to the "new man, which after God is created in righteousness and holiness of truth" (Eph. iv. 24), is not quite clear. The effect of imputing righteousness to the "old man, which waxeth corrupt after the lusts of deceit" (Eph. iv. 22) would naturally be to *shield him from justice*, and so to guarantee his perpetual existence ; whereas, according to Scripture, he is being crucified, mortified, or put to death, day by day, exactly as Christ was when *exposed to justice*. Anyhow, it may be taken for granted that the development, not less the origination, of the new man is entirely independent of the imputed righteousness of Christ, that it would take place exactly as it does whether the righteousness of Christ were imputed or no. The breath and blood of the new man is not the imputed righteousness of Christ, but faith, and the exercise of faith is the cause of the imputation of Christ's righteousness, not the consequence of it. Now, it is quite certain that the new man or new creature is distinguished by perfect righteousness or perfect holiness—therein differing radically from the old man ; that, having God Himself for an exemplar, he is created in righteousness and holiness of truth (Eph. iv. 24) ; that he is renewed after the image of Him that created him (Col. iii. 10) ; that he is conformed to the image of Christ as now perfected and glorified (Rom. viii. 29) ; that, being born of God, he inherits the nature of God—that he is righteous and doeth righteousness even as God is righteous and doeth righteousness (1 John iii. 7-10) ; and that the believer, by

putting off the old man and putting on the new, is enabled to fulfil the law (Rom. viii. 4), and so to enjoy its reward, which is life, whilst escaping its penalty, which is death (Rom. viii. 13). It is certain, also, that the process of regeneration, or renewal, or repentance, is attended at every stage of the believer's earthly history by the remission of sins, including the forgiveness of past transgressions, that is, of their penalties, and the weakening or destruction of the principle of sin itself (1 John i. 9). And, further, it is certain that when death comes, the flesh or old man is utterly destroyed, and with it the principle of sin; the believer's past transgressions are all forgiven; the old things are passed completely away; the new alone are left, and the new are all of God; so that when the believer appears for judgment, he appears perfected, sanctified, glorified. Yet once more, it is certain that when the believer has thus finished his course and kept the faith, when he has thus attained to righteousness and been made perfect, when he has reached the goal and won the prize, he shall receive, as his reward, the crown of life or of glory—the crown due to righteousness—which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give him at that day (2 Tim. iv. 7, 8; Phil. iii. 8-14). For, in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, He shall justify and reward with life eternal, not the hearers, but the doers of the law,—not the possessor of imputed, but the possessor of inherent righteousness; rendering to every man *according to his works*, He shall render to them that *by patience in well-doing* seek for glory and honour and incorruption, eternal life; and each one shall thus receive *the things done in the body according to what he hath done*, whether it be good or bad (Rom. ii. 6, 7, 13, 16; 2 Cor. v. 10; Matt. xxv. 34 *seq.*). From all which it plainly appears that, at no stage in the believer's history, is there any room or any need for the imputed righteousness of Christ. The believer cannot possibly possess such righteousness during his earthly life; for then he is treated exactly as if he did not possess it. He cannot possibly possess such righteousness at the day of final judgment; for then, too, he is treated exactly as if he did not possess it. But if the believer possess the imputed righteousness of Christ neither during his earthly life nor yet at the

final judgment, then he cannot really possess it at all; that is, the righteousness of Christ cannot really be imputed to him at all.

To sum up the results bearing on the third and last application of the theory of imputation:—(1.) There is no real transference of the debitum from one person to another. (2.) The debitum is not even conferred on one person with another. (3.) Nay, it is not conferred at all—not even on an indefinite number of persons with another; so that the analogy to the case of Paul and Onesimus has here reached the vanishing point. (4.) There accompanies, or rather precedes, the supposed conferring of the debitum, the actual and certain conferring of a state of character which, while it serves in the end all the purposes of the debitum, serves at the same time to explain how the debitum is excluded.

We have thus endeavoured briefly to review the three well-known applications of the doctrine of imputation. We have found that they all differ at once from each other, and from an original case proposed as a type,—that each has some peculiarities of its own, which it does not share with any of the others. We have found that the theory as a whole involves a series of the most startling difficulties, incongruities, and even absurdities, particularly under its second and third applications. We have found that in no case is the theory demanded to account for any fact of experience, that all the phenomena of sin and salvation would happen exactly as they do whether the theory were true or false, that they can all be explained upon known and acknowledged principles apart altogether from imputation, that while, in the first and second cases, the acknowledged facts of experience are not so directly opposed to the theory as to exclude it absolutely, yet that they raise an exceedingly strong presumption against it, and that, in the third case, the theory is so directly contradicted by the whole course of Christian experience in this world and the next as to be absolutely and utterly excluded. We shall find presently that this last application, which the facts of experience absolutely disprove, is the only application in support of which even the semblance of Scripture evidence can be produced; the others which are not absolutely disproved by experience, are destitute of all Scrip-

ture authority, the word *impute* never being used with reference either to the first sin of Adam as bearing on his posterity, or to the sins of the elect as bearing on Christ. It is evident, too, that the second and third applications are so entirely dependent on one another, that the disproof or rejection of the one must necessarily involve the disproof or rejection of the other; and the same is true, though not perhaps to the same extent, of the first application also. Indeed, the two first applications may be said to possess importance only as leading up to the third, being postulated, in the absence of evidence, mainly for the purpose of helping it out,—the second being deemed essential to the existence of the third, and the other to the proof of its existence; so that the complete failure of the theory in the last, most important, most central, and most plausible of all its applications is tantamount to the complete failure of the theory as a whole.

But, apart altogether from Scripture evidence, and even from the evidence of fact and experience, the theory, when reduced to an explicit form, is seen to be so exceedingly complex, clumsy, round-about, and incongruous—so entirely wanting in naturalness, simplicity, and feasibility—that the mere statement of it is almost the best refutation that could be offered, and will probably have surprised the innocent reader. He has possibly been taught and accustomed to regard the case of Christ and each believer as one of simple substitution, like that of Paul and Onesimus; or, at the most (if the expression may be allowed), of *double* substitution, Christ receiving his sin, while he at the same time receives Christ's righteousness, according to the well-known saying of Luther, "I am Thy sin; Thou art my righteousness." Not improbably, too, the idea that Christ in His death offered Himself as a sacrifice for the purpose of expiating the sins of the whole body of the elect, in like manner as the Jewish high priest on the day of atonement offered the appointed goat as a sacrifice with the view of expiating the sins of the whole people of Israel; I say, possibly this idea has mixed itself up in the reader's mind with the bare idea of imputation as exemplified in the case of Paul and Onesimus, producing a singularly intricate combination of ideas. And when there is added to this the further notion that Christ



is not only the spiritual Head from whom the whole body of believers is descended, but the federal Head by whom they are represented, in like manner as Adam is supposed to have been not only the natural head from whom the whole human race is descended, but the federal head by whom they were represented, the commingling and confusion of different ideas become still more perplexing to unravel, and still more hopeless to adjust. Some of the most glaring incongruities in the imputation theory are, no doubt, to be traced to this mixing up of heterogeneous and mutually conflicting ideas. For example, as long as we view Christ as a sacrificial victim on whom the sins of all His people were laid, it is quite a feasible thing that His Divine nature should be credited with imparting infinite value to His sufferings, in order that these may correspond in some sort with the amount of sin to be expiated. But when from this idea we pass to another, in which the obedience and sufferings of Christ are made to do duty as a *righteousness*, which is imputed to each individual believer in virtue of his connection with Christ, his federal Head and Representative, the incongruity is already apparent. By the sacrificial idea, attention is fixed exclusively on the last agony and death of the victim, the life-long obedience, and even the life-long sufferings, being left entirely out of account. In the other idea, the obedience is the more prominent element of the two; and the sufferings, instead of being concentrated at death, are spread over the whole life. In the former case, where the sufferings and death of Christ are thought of as expiating the accumulated sins of the whole body of the elect, which they do, or ought to do, directly without the intervention of any counter-imputation, the infinite-value hypothesis seems at least an admissible one. In the latter case, where the aggregate of Christ's obedience and sufferings is thought of as imputed to each individual believer for the purpose of constituting him righteous, the infinite-value hypothesis appears entirely inadmissible. Again, it is very difficult to combine the notion of federal headship with the common impression regarding imputation, that it involves substitution, in the strict sense of the word. For nothing is more certain than that Adam was not the substitute of his posterity in the strict sense. The penalty

of Adam's first sin was not borne by his posterity, instead of being borne by himself; for that would imply, not only that Adam escaped death, but also that the penalty which Adam escaped was divided piecemeal among the whole body of his descendants; whereas, by the admission of theologians themselves, Adam *suffered* death, and the penalty which Adam suffered is borne by *each* of his descendants, instead of being borne by all.

But enough has now been said as to what the doctrine of imputation is, and what it involves. The reader will be good enough to bear in mind that we have been dealing with the thing itself which passes under that name, and not with the word by which it is commonly expressed. It is not unusual for theologians, when challenged to produce Scripture evidence in support of their views, to evade the challenge by avowing that they do not stand on the word *impute*, but merely on the thing expressed by it; if the latter is contained in Scripture, it matters less about the former. Vague, general allegations of this sort are indeed difficult to answer directly, but they will satisfy no one who bases his opinions on proof, and not on the absence of disproof. If the discussion contained in this introductory chapter shall assist the reader in perceiving the hollowness of such evasions; if it shall contribute in any degree to clarify his ideas, and dissipate confused or false impressions; if it shall help him to form a just as well as an accurate conception of what must be allowed to constitute not the least considerable part of a doctrine of salvation generally held, and still more generally professed; if it shall enable him to feel the force of difficulties, neither few nor small, that lie in the way of accepting these or similar views, whether in whole or in part; if it shall dispel from his mental vision the glamour of plausibility and false reasonableness, which familiarity, custom, convention, official sanction and authority never fail to impart to any opinion, however absurd; if it shall thus prepare and lead him to enter with open mind and without bias on the examination of evidence; then the purpose for which it has been written will have been fully accomplished. In next chapter, I shall proceed to canvass the direct evidence which the theory of imputation is supposed to

have in the language of the New Testament; and I am not without hope of being able to convince the impartial reader that *neither* the word *nor* the thing has the smallest Scripture foundation.

## CHAPTER II.

## DIRECT SCRIPTURE EVIDENCE IN FAVOUR OF IMPUTATION.

MEN who have studied the New Testament with any measure of attention will not require to be told that it affords no direct, explicit, or express evidence in support of the doctrine we are now considering. Whatever evidence of an indirect and inferential kind the theory of imputation may be thought to possess, no one can pretend that it is ever expressly asserted in any part of the New Testament writings. There will not be produced a single passage in which it is said, either that Adam's first sin is imputed to his descendants, or that the sins of the elect are imputed to Christ, or that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to believers. Neither one nor other of these things is ever affirmed in so many words. Most readers, no doubt, will have contrived to see the doctrine everywhere, and to see it most clearly in passages where the word *impute* does not occur, nor anything equivalent to it. Still, it cannot be deemed wholly superfluous, or out of place, to recall attention to the indisputable fact which has just been stated.

That the idea of imputing *sin* from one person to another is foreign to the New Testament might be taken as sufficiently proved by the fact that no New Testament writer makes even an approach to the expression of such an idea. The word *reckon* (λογίζομαι), or *impute* (ἐλλογέω), is never used in connection either with the transferring of sin from one person to another, or with the conferring of sin on one person with another. Of texts or passages speaking of the imputation of Adam's first sin to each of his descendants, there are absolutely none; though the word *impute* occurs in the heart of the



very passage—nay, of the very sentence—where the idea would naturally have found expression (Rom. v. 13)! In that sentence, however, the idea is so far from being actually expressed, that a principle is enunciated touching the imputation to men of *their own* sin, which can only be regarded as excluding the imputation of Adam's or any other sin *a fortiori*. But of this more hereafter.

The principle referred to would seem, among other things, to exclude even—or rather, especially—the imputation of human sin to Christ; and at anyrate, this idea, like the other, is absolutely without Scripture authority. An exception to the universal sweep of the last assertion can hardly be thought necessary in favour of the isolated Old Testament expression quoted and applied by Christ to Himself on the night of His betrayal: “And He was reckoned with lawless ones” (Luke xxii. 37). Such a statement might be made of any Christian suffering as Christ suffered, for righteousness' sake (Matt. v. 10, 11; 1 Pet. iii. 14-18; iv. 14-16, &c.). Such a statement might have been made, for example, of the Apostle Paul (2 Tim. ii. 9), and of the early Christians generally, who were habitually accused of the darkest crimes and the vilest abominations, and who suffered the penalties meet to the perpetrators of such lawless deeds. On the very face of them, the words have nothing whatever to do with the reckoning of human sin by God to Christ. It is not God who reckons at all, but the ungodly persecutors, who regarded and treated Christ as a malefactor after He had been betrayed by Judas. This is the meaning of the words, as the context plainly shows; and nothing but utter despair of finding real evidence could have induced any one to seek in them a proof, or even a presumption, in favour of the doctrine that the sins of all the elect were imputed to Christ the moment He assumed human flesh. If it be said that the Old Testament context of the quotation appears to countenance the notion that the sins of a collective body of individuals were imputed to a single individual, by whom their penalties were borne, this may or may not be true—the point need not be argued here—but whether true or not, it proves nothing as to the meaning put upon the words, when wrenched from their original connection

and placed in an entirely different connection. According to the context in Luke, the words did not receive their fulfilment in Christ till after His betrayal, whereas, on the theory of imputation, they would have been fulfilled from the first moment of the incarnation. And besides, there is no idea in Luke of reckoning the sins of *other parties* to Christ ; it is Christ Himself that is regarded as sinful, and treated as such by wicked men. If, on the other hand, it be alleged that the application of a single expression from the Old Testament passage to Christ implies that the whole section is equally applicable to Him, and that, though the expression quoted, taken by itself, does not distinctly convey the idea that the sins of men are imputed to Christ, other expressions in the same section, taken in connection with this one, do distinctly convey such an idea ; if this be alleged, it may be enough to say that this is another and a much wider question, which will be adequately dealt with in due course.

The case, as regards the imputation of Christ's *righteousness* to each believer, is not different from the other two. A single Old Testament quotation, expressing something quite different from what is required, is all that can be adduced to support the idea. The quotation—a favourite one, cited by two different writers, and in three different books (Rom. iv. 3 ; Gal. iii. 6 ; James ii. 23)—is in the following terms :—“ Abraham believed God, and it [= his faith (Rom. iv. 5, 9)] was reckoned unto him for righteousness.” No human ingenuity can extract from these words the doctrine that the righteousness—meaning, let it be remembered, the obedience and sufferings—of Christ was imputed to Abraham the moment he first believed the word of God. The doctrine of imputation requires that the thing imputed should be the righteousness, or rather, the obedience and sufferings, of Christ ; but the thing imputed to Abraham was faith. The doctrine of imputation requires that the thing imputed should be something from without, something which the individual himself does not possess—that the imputation should be *from* one person to another ; but here Abraham possessed the faith, and there was no second party at all. The doctrine of imputation requires that the time of imputation should be the moment when a

man first exercises faith in God ; but, if we may trust the author of Hebrews, and the indications of history, Abraham had been a believer ever since he left Ur of the Chaldees. So entirely inconsistent is the plain sense of the words with the doctrine they are supposed to teach ! Yet surely it is most evident that the form of the language in Rom. iv. (we need not speak of Galatians and James) is completely dominated and determined by the language of the quotation which lies at the basis of the reasoning, that the constant recurrence of the word *reckon* throughout the chapter is due simply to the occurrence of that word in the fundamental text ; that the Apostle, having laid hold of a catchword, proceeds, in a manner usual with him, to ring the changes upon it ; that the word is echoed and re-echoed from beginning to end of the chapter, not because it is the word best suited to convey the writer's thought, but because it is furnished to him from an external source ; that but for the fact that the word *reckon* was found in the Old Testament passage, no such word would ever have been used, either by Paul or by any other writer, in connection with the doctrine that righteousness or justification is attained by faith.

Still, there are several questions that naturally suggest themselves to the mind of the reader. Why did the Apostle adduce the quotation at all ? What is the precise meaning which he extracts from it, or, if that be the more correct expression, which he imports into it ? How does that meaning stand related, on the one hand, to the original historical sense of the words as used by the Old Testament writer, and, on the other hand, to the Apostle's doctrine of salvation, justification, or righteousness by faith, as expressed in language properly his own ? Is the Apostle's doctrine of justification accurately expressed by the Old Testament words which he quotes, and if not, why does he make use of these words to express it ? Were the Apostle's ideas concerning the method of human salvation derived from the study of this and other Old Testament passages, and are they dependent for their validity on the accuracy of his Old Testament exegesis ? When the New Testament writers convey their ideas in terms of Old Testament quotations, are we entitled in seeking to

ascertain the ideas to start from these quotations, to press their strict grammatical meaning just as we should the meaning of words framed by the writers themselves for the express purpose of conveying their ideas; or, still more unjustifiably, to modify the strict grammatical meaning, not upon any distinct principle, but in order to render it more definite, or more intelligible; and then, having put what we regard as a proper, feasible, or worthy sense on the quoted words, to employ the sense thus determined as a touchstone to rule the interpretation of passages where the writers convey their ideas in literal terms of their own framing? These and other related questions admit, I believe, of a very distinct answer, which shall, for convenience' sake, be briefly presented in this place.

One thing, then, may be taken for granted at the outset. We cannot assume it as a first principle that the historical sense of the Old Testament and the sense put upon it by the New Testament writers always and necessarily coincide; in other words, that the New Testament writers interpret the Old Testament with infallible authority. The fact that in the New Testament a certain meaning is put upon the words of an Old Testament writer does not of itself prove that the Old Testament writer used the words to convey that meaning; and, *vice versa*, the fact that an Old Testament writer used words to convey a certain meaning does not of itself prove that a New Testament writer, reading or quoting the words, would put upon them the same meaning. For, to assume any such thing, would involve consequences infinitely more serious than to deny it. It would imply that the Old Testament is not an intelligible book, written to be understood by ordinary men, and amenable to the ordinary laws of historical interpretation, but a book full of sacred enigmas, requiring to be interpreted by inspired authority. Unless we agree to abjure all pretence of consistency, one or other of two alternatives must be adopted. We must either maintain that the Old Testament in all its parts, quoted and unquoted alike, was written to be understood by its original readers, and that, having been so written, its meaning may be definitely ascertained



by applying the ordinary laws of historical interpretation ; or we must maintain that the Old Testament in all its parts, unquoted and quoted alike, was unintelligible or enigmatical to its original readers, that it was written to be understood, not by them, but by Christian readers, under the guidance of inspired apostles and prophets, and that, having been so written, its meaning cannot be definitely ascertained by applying the ordinary laws of historical interpretation. To say that historical interpretation is to be accepted as valid and sufficient in all cases, save where authoritative interpretation is available—in which case the former must yield to the latter—is manifestly out of the question. Caprice so intolerable would utterly destroy confidence in every method of interpretation, and render anything like certainty as to the meaning of the Old Testament an impossibility. If historical interpretation is to be accepted as valid for the Old Testament at all, it must be accepted as valid universally, in spite of conflicting authoritative interpretation ; as, conversely, if authoritative interpretation is to be allowed to over-ride and invalidate historical interpretation at all, historical interpretation, as applied to the Old Testament Scriptures, must be allowed to be universally invalid. Were the Old Testament passages quoted and interpreted in the New all of one class, were they all taken from one book, or bearing on one particular subject, there might, in that case, be some plausible ground for maintaining that historical interpretation and authoritative interpretation should be permitted to stand together. The two, it might be urged, have distinct provinces, within which, but within which alone, their validity is unquestionable ; the former loses its validity only when it seeks to intrude into the sphere of the latter. But since the passages quoted and interpreted in the New Testament are taken from all, or nearly all, of the Old Testament books, since they belong not to one but to every species of composition—history, prophecy, philosophy, poetry—and bear upon every sort of subject, no such notion can for a moment be entertained. The quoted and unquoted parts of the Old Testament are entirely homogeneous, and historical interpretation, if recognised as valid for the one, must be recog-

nised as valid for the other as well. But, if historical interpretation be recognised as universally valid for the Old Testament, then New Testament interpretation cannot be recognised as authoritative. In cases where the two coincide, both will possess equal validity, and therefore equal authority. In cases where the two conflict, New Testament interpretation will not be more, but less valid than historical, and, therefore, less authoritative; that is, New Testament interpretation, as such, will be shown to possess no independent authority whatever.

It will not do to adopt a middle course. We cannot, without the grossest inconsistency, bow to the authority of New Testament exegesis in one chapter or verse, while setting it aside as worthless in the next. This, though a common enough practice, is a wholly unjustifiable one. When the New Testament writers interpret the Old Testament bloody sacrifices as types or prefigurations of the death of Christ, or when they interpret Isa. liii. and Ps. cx. as spoken directly of Christ, their authority is all but universally accepted as final. But when the writer to the Hebrews interprets Exod. xxv. 40 to mean that all the parts of the earthly material tabernacle were copied from the corresponding parts of a heavenly immaterial tabernacle, which Moses saw in the mount (viii. 5); when he interprets Ps. xl. as spoken directly of Jesus Christ, and as pointing to the abolition of legal offerings in favour of the offering of Christ's body (x. 5, *seq.*); when he interprets Ps. xcv. as spoken directly to men under the Christian dispensation (iii. 7, *seq.*); Isa. viii. 18 as spoken directly by Christ, or put into the mouth of Christ (ii. 13); and Ps. viii. 5 as contrasting the present-world humiliation with the future-world glorification of man—a contrast exemplified in principle in the history of Christ (ii. 6-9); when he interprets the passage in Gen. relating to Melchizedek, in the light of Ps. cx., so as plainly and necessarily to imply that Melchizedek was and is an eternally-existent, underived, supernatural being, the prototype of Jesus Christ (vii. 1, *seq.*); when Paul interprets the story of the two sons of Abraham by the bondmaid and the free woman, as intended to prefigure Judaism enslaved by the law and Christianity free from the law (Gal. iv. 22-31);

when he interprets the transitory shining of Moses' face, which he concealed by means of a veil, as intended to prefigure the transitoriness of the law's glory, which the Jews failed to perceive (2 Cor. iii. 13-16); when he interprets the precept in Deut. xxv. 4, with respect to muzzling the threshing ox, as intended *solely* to prescribe the duty of Christians to maintain the preachers of the Gospel (1 Cor. ix. 9, 10); when he interprets the word "seed," in Gen. xvii. 7, as meant to refer to a single individual—viz., Christ (Gal. iii. 16); when he interprets Ps. xix. 4 as referring to the universal preaching of salvation (Rom. x. 18); Ps. lxviii. 18 as referring to the bestowal of gifts by Christ after His ascension (Eph. iv. 8-10); Ps. lxix. 9 as words put into the mouth of Christ (Rom. xv. 3); Isa. xxviii. 11, 12, as referring to the gift of speaking with tongues (1 Cor. xiv. 21); Isa. xlix. 8 as referring to the Christian dispensation (2 Cor. vi. 2); when Peter interprets Ps. xvi. 10 as a prediction by David of the resurrection of Christ (Acts ii. 25, *seq.*); and Ps. lxix. 25 as a prediction by David of the fate of Judas (Acts i. 16-20);—in these, and many other instances that might be cited, there are, to say the least, the gravest doubts as to the historicity of the interpretations. Yet to accept the exegesis of the New Testament writers as inspired, authoritative, infallible, in one passage or book, while rejecting it as frivolous, fanciful, and absurd in another, is not to proceed upon principles, but upon the negation of principles. The views of the New Testament writers as to the meaning intended to be conveyed by the writers of the Old must be accepted in their entirety, or not at all. If the testimony of the New Testament writers be evidence that the Old Testament bloody sacrifices were intended to prefigure the death of Christ, and that Isa. liii. was spoken directly of Christ, it must likewise be evidence that the earthly tabernacle was copied from a heavenly archetype, and that Ps. xl. and Ps. lxix. were spoken directly of Christ; and, conversely, if the testimony of the New Testament writers be no evidence that the earthly tabernacle was copied from a heavenly archetype, and that Ps. xl. and Ps. lxix. were spoken directly of Christ, it can be no evidence that the Old Testament bloody sacrifices were intended to prefigure the death of Christ, and that Isa. liii. was spoken

directly of Christ. To say that the New Testament interpretations are to be accepted as authoritative in all cases, save where they flagrantly and palpably violate the historical sense, is a principle rather to be tacitly adopted and acted upon than to be explicitly avowed and deliberately defended in cold blood. And to say that the New Testament interpretations are authoritative when confirmed by historical interpretation, but not authoritative when contradicted by historical interpretation, is equivalent to saying that they are not authoritative at all, and that the only available method of interpretation is the historical one.

Assuming, therefore, as beyond dispute, that the Old Testament was written to be understood by its original readers—that it is amenable to the ordinary laws of historical interpretation—that its meaning can be as decisively settled on the grammatico-historical method as that of the New Testament, or of any other ancient writing; assuming this, and discarding the alternative notion that the Old Testament exegesis of the New Testament writers is authoritative, and therefore infallible, the question still remains, Whether and how far the results of historical exegesis agree or disagree with those of apostolic or Christian exegesis? The answer may be given in the words of an eminent writer of acknowledged candour and impartiality, whom I quote with the greater pleasure, and whose testimony will be the more acceptable, as he is unquestionably one of the ablest *orthodox* Biblical scholars now alive. The following extract, though referring directly only to the writings of Paul, is, in all its essential features, at least as applicable to every one of the New Testament writings:—

“(a.) The promise which was given to the fathers, and belongs inalienably to the nation which is descended from them, accompanies, as prophecy, the nation of Israel through its whole history, and is therefore also an essential part of its Holy Scriptures. Nay, the whole of Scripture (*ὁ νόμος καὶ οἱ προφῆται*—Rom. iii. 21), which appears from one side as a revelation of the Divine will (*ὁ νόμος*), can also be thought of from the other side as prophetic. If, however, it is only for the Jews that the law (*ὁ νόμος*) has its significance (iii. 19)—and even for them this significance is only transitory—it is for the future generations, which should see its fulfilment, that Scripture considered



as prophecy first has its real significance (*cf.* 1 Pet. i. 12). This necessary consequence of the conception of prophecy as directly Messianic, Paul has drawn as well as Peter. The import of God's message of salvation, which the apostle proclaims, God has promised afore by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures (Rom. i. 2). But as even here the prophetic activity is looked at exclusively from that side according to which its organs have put down their prophecies in the writings which were appointed for the future, so it follows from xvi. 26 that the specific significance of these writings is such that it could only be meant for that future. There—viz., it is said that in the Christian present the mystery of salvation is made known through the Scriptures of the prophets, inasmuch as, by means of the proof, that that which is now proclaimed was already foretold by the prophets—the basis was laid for the knowledge that it is really the Divine decree, which was formed long ago, which the apostles preach. Thus, the participation of the Gentiles in Abraham's salvation, which was indicated in Gen. xii. 3, was preached beforehand as glad tidings by the *Scripture*; it (*i.e.*, God, who speaks in it) foresaw the future justification of the Gentiles by faith (Gal. iii. 8). Nay, that which was thus witnessed by the law and the prophets was by no means yet manifested by this witness to their own age, which could not yet regard it and understand it in the light of its fulfilment (Rom. iii. 21, *cf.* Eph. iii. 5). It was first manifested in the day of salvation by means of the Gospel (i. 17). Accordingly, the significance of that which was written beforehand does not belong to the time in which it was written; it was written for *our* instruction (Rom. xv. 4) and admonition (1 Cor. x. 11).

“(b.) The extent to which Paul found the import of the Messianic message of salvation directly preached beforehand in Scripture, appears from his incidental allusions to Old Testament prophecy. Christ has died and risen again according to the Scriptures (1 Cor. xv. 3, 4); the reproaches that fell upon Him are foretold in Ps. lxix. 9 (Rom. xv. 3); the dominion which was given Him in Ps. viii. 6 (1 Cor. xv. 27). Where he has found the promise of the Spirit (Gal. iii. 14 *cf.* Eph. i. 13), the apostle does not say. The doctrine of the righteousness of faith is witnessed by the law and the prophets (Rom. iii. 21 *cf.* Gal. iii. 11; Rom. i. 17 after Hab. ii. 4; Rom. iv. 6-8 after Ps. xxxii. 1, 2); in particular, witness is borne to faith as the condition of salvation in Isa. xxviii. 16 (Rom. x. 11), and as the source of the preaching of the Gospel in Ps. cxvi. 10 (2 Cor. iv. 13). The universality of the preaching of salvation Paul finds in Ps. xix. 4 (Rom. x. 18); the destruction of human wisdom by the foolishness of preaching in Isa.

xxix. 14 (1 Cor. i. 19); the calling of the Gentiles in Hos. ii. 23; i. 10 (Rom. ix. 25, 26); Deut. xxxii. 21; Isa. lxv. 1 (Rom. x. 19, 20); Ps. xviii. 49; Deut. xxxii. 43; Ps. cxvii. 1; Isa. xi. 10 (Rom. xv. 9-12); Isa. lii. 15 (Rom. xv. 21); and in a certain sense even in the promise to the patriarchs (Gal. iii. 8; Rom. iv. 18). The unbelief of the Jews he sees foretold in Isa. liii. 1; lxv. 2 (Rom. x. 16-21); the offence which they take at Christ in Isa. viii. 14; xxviii. 16 (Rom. ix. 33); their obduracy in Isa. xxix. 10; vi. 9, 10; Deut. xxix. 4; Ps. lxix. 22, 23 (Rom. xi. 8-10); their partial rejection in Isa. x. 22, 23; i. 9 (Rom. ix. 27-29); their final salvation in Isa. lix. 20; Jer. xxxi. 33, 34 (Rom. xi. 26, 27). That the Christian Church is the temple of God he finds in Lev. xxvi. 11, 12; Isa. lii. 11; Jer. xxxi. 9; 2 Sam. vii. 14 (2 Cor. vi. 16-18); the bestowal of the gifts of grace he finds in Ps. lxviii. 18 (Eph. iv. 8-10); and even the special gift of speaking with tongues in Isa. xxviii. 11, 12 (1 Cor. xiv. 21). The continual persecution of Christians is foretold in Ps. xlv. 22 (Rom. viii. 36); the final overthrow of death in Isa. xxv. 8; Hos. xiii. 14 (1 Cor. xv. 54, 55).

“(c.) Scripture is prophetic not only in its expressions, but also in its typical history. In consequence of the Divine guiding of history, the events of the Messianic time were represented as to their nature and significance in earlier historical events. Thus, according to Rom. v. 14, Adam is a type of the future (second) Adam, inasmuch as in him it is shown how an influence extends from one to the whole race. So the Israelites of the Mosaic time, with their experiences of salvation, as well as with the judgments of God that befell them, are τύποι ἡμῶν (1 Cor. x. 6); what happened to them happened to them typically (τυπικῶς), i.e., so that we might learn what we have to experience and shall experience if we conduct ourselves similarly (v. 11.) Naturally, he always keeps in view the committing of this history to writing; it was by this means that it could first receive this significance for the future. What Scripture relates regarding the justification of Abraham is not only written in order to describe his justification (δὲ ἀβραάμ), but also to instruct us as to the manner of our own (Rom. iv. 23, 24 cf. iii. 21). Moreover, the boundary line between this way of looking at the history as a type, and the simple borrowing of illustrative examples out of it, is a fluctuating one. When the comfort, which God gave to Elias (Rom. xi. 2-4) is made to apply to the present (v. 5), when the procedure of God when He elected Isaac or Jacob (ix. 6-13), or when He hardened Pharaoh's heart (v. 17), illustrates His present bearing, these are, primarily, only historical examples, which, however, could have been equally well

regarded as types.\* That Paul looked at the institutions of the Old Testament also from this point of view cannot be directly proved. When, however, Christ is represented as a *ἱλαστήριον* (Rom. iii. 25), and a Paschal Lamb (1 Cor. v. 7 *cf.* Eph. v. 2), when the sacrificial system in general (Rom. xii. 1; xv. 16), and the rite of the feast of the passover in particular (1 Cor. v. 7, 8), are given an application to Christian circumstances (*cf.* Col. ii. 11; Phil. ii. 17; iii. 3; iv. 18), when the Church is called the true temple of God (1 Cor. iii. 16; 2 Cor. vi. 16), when an appointment of the law relating to the priests is used as an illustration of an ordinance of God in the Christian Church (1 Cor. ix. 13), and the Jewish sacrificial meal appears as an analogon of the Christian Supper (1 Cor. x. 18), there lies at the basis of all these allusions the presupposition that these institutions, which were appointed by God, have a typical character as well as the events which were under His guidance, from which, however, it does not by any means follow that this part of the law does not also have its significance as law.

“(d.) In consequence of his Rabbinical training, Paul was also acquainted with the allegorising way of interpreting the Old Testament, and made use of it. According to it, the narratives of the Old Testament have, without prejudice to their historical character, also another meaning than that which the words express, inasmuch as the Spirit, who suggested these words, meant to prophesy something future with them, and it is the business of the interpreter to discover this meaning by a deeper comprehension of Scripture (Gal. iv. 24). Thus the two sons of Abraham by the maid and the free-woman are an allegory of Judaism enslaved by the law, and of Christianity free from the law (iv. 22-31). Here, therefore, a fact of the past is a prophetic type of a fact of the Messianic present; it is not so, however, *per se*, but in consequence of the fathoming of its deeper meaning. In a similar manner, Paul explains the story of the shining countenance of Moses, and of the veil with which he concealed it (Exod. xxxiv.), allegorically, so as to make it refer to the transitory glory of the law, and to the circumstance that this its transitory character was hidden from the unbelieving Jews (2 Cor. iii. 13-16 *cf.* v. 7). So the hidden allegorical meaning (τὸ μυστήριον) of Gen. ii. 24 refers to Christ and His Church (Eph. v. 32). In a similar manner Paul can now also explain legal precepts allegorically, as when—*e.g.*, he makes the precept in Deut. xxv. 4 refer to the right of the preachers of the Gospel to be

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\* Jesus already regards the fate of Jonah as a type of His fate (Matt. xii. 40), and the Flood as a type of the last judgment (xxiv. 37-39; *cf.* 1 Pet. iii. 20, 21).

maintained by the Church (1 Cor. ix. 10). In this case, however, he justifies his explanation by expressly excluding the literal meaning as being absolutely inadmissible (v. 9 : *μὴ τῶν βοῶν μέλει τῷ θεῷ*) ; his religious appreciation of the Old Testament cannot bear that one of its appointments could have in view the well-being of animals and not that of man."

"(a.) Paul quotes Scripture very frequently. It is in our four epistles (Romans, I. and II. Corinthians, and Galatians), however, that by far the most of his quotations are found ; and of these epistles it was those to the Romans and the Galatians whose aim most of all directly demanded them. In the epistles to the purely Gentile-Christian Churches of Thessalonica, Philippi, and Colosse, there are no quotations at all. The apostle usually introduces them with a *γέγραπται*, which is found about thirty times, or with the similar formula, *ἡ γραφὴ λέγει* (Gal. iv. 30 ; Rom. iv. 3 ; ix. 17 ; x. 11 ; xi. 2 ; cf. 2 Cor. iv. 13, *κατὰ τὸ γεγραμμένον* ; 1 Cor. xv. 54, *ὁ λόγος ὁ γεγραμμένος* ; cf. Rom. ix. 9 ; iv. 18, *κατὰ τὸ εἰρημένον*). It is only in 1 Cor. ix. 9, xiv. 21, cf. Rom. vii. 7, and in Rom. xi. 2, that indications are found as to the place of Scripture in which the quotation in question stands (cf. Mark xii. 26 ; Acts i. 20 ; vii. 42). It is seldom that Paul introduces the writers as speaking (Rom. iv. 6 ; xi. 9 : David in the Psalms whose title bears his name ; x. 5, 19 : Moses in passages out of Leviticus and Deuteronomy ; ix. 27, 29 ; x. 16, 20 ; xv. 12 : Isaiah).\* It is very seldom that God appears in him as the one who speaks (2 Cor. vi. 2, 16, 17 ; Rom. ix. 15, 25), and that, too, only when the point in question is as to an express utterance of God (cf. Acts iv. 25 ; xiii. 47). By far the most of his quotations are from Isaiah and the Psalms ; next in order comes the Pentateuch, specially Genesis and Deuteronomy. Individual quotations are found also from the other prophets, and one from Job (1 Cor. iii. 19 ; cf. Rom. xi. 34, 35) ; here and there a few sayings out of the Book of Proverbs are used

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\* Similarly the earliest tradition makes Christ trace back passages of the law to Moses (Mark vii. 10 ; cf. xii. 19), and a prophecy to Isaiah (Mark vii. 6), and in Mark xii. 36 *seq.* the whole argument of Christ rests upon the circumstance that, according to the title, it is David that speaks in Psalm cx. 1. Similarly, in his discourse in Acts ii. 25-28, 34, 35, Peter starts expressly from the Davidic authorship of the passages quoted ; in Acts iv. 25 a Psalm is even treated of as Davidic whose title does not assign it to him. In Acts ii. 16, vii. 48, xiii. 40, passages from the prophets are merely described as such, without naming the prophet ; on the other hand, in Mark i. 2, Luke iv. 17, Acts viii. 28, 30, xxviii. 25, Isaiah is named ; through him, according to the last of these passages, the Holy Ghost spake.



without being expressly quoted (2 Cor. ix. 7 ; Rom. xii. 17, 20). The case is exactly the same in the Epistle of Peter and in the discourses of the Acts.

“(b.) As it is substantially in the form of the text of the LXX. that the earliest tradition of the discourses of Jesus and the apostles puts into their mouths the quotations from the Old Testament that are made by them, so it is mainly that text which Paul also uses, even in cases where the Greek text varies essentially from the Hebrew (Gal. iii. 13 ; Rom. ii. 24 ; iii. 4 ; iv. 3 ; ix. 27-29 ; xi. 9, 10, 26, 27 ; xv. 10, 12, 21 ; 1 Cor. i. 19 ; vi. 16 ; Eph. v. 31 ; vi. 2) ; yet here and there there appears in him an independent knowledge and use of the original (*cf.* 1 Cor. iii. 19 ; xiv. 21 ; xv. 54 *seq.* ; Rom. ix. 17 ; xii. 19 ; Eph. iv. 8), as we might naturally expect from his Rabbinical training. In his quotations, Paul uses great freedom. As the particular writings from which the several quotations are taken are seldom reflected on, so totally different passages of Scripture are often freely combined with one another (1 Cor. xv. 54, 55 ; 2 Cor. vi. 16-18 ; Rom. iii. 10-18 ; ix. 25, 26 ; xi. 26, 27), or completely mixed up together (Rom. ix. 33 ; xi. 8). But elsewhere also the quotation is often a very free one (1 Cor. ii. 9 ; Eph. v. 14) ; and there are found not only great abbreviations (1 Cor. i. 31), or insignificant changes of expression (2 Cor. vi. 16 ; Rom. xiv. 11), but also changes (Gal. iv. 30, τῆς ἐλευθέρου ; 1 Cor. iii. 20, τῶν σοφῶν ; Eph. iv. 8, ἔδωκε) and additions (1 Cor. xv. 45, πρῶτος . . . Ἀδάμ ; Rom. x. 11, πᾶς), which are of great importance for the apostle's application of the passages.\*

“(c.) Closely connected with the manner in which the passages of Scripture are considered only as such, and not as individual utterances of definite writers, and are therefore taken out of their connection and freely combined, is the circumstance that their explanation attaches itself simply to the words. Herein Paul follows the exegetical method of his time. Accordingly, what is said in the original of a definite time can be generalised (Rom. iii. 10-18), or what is said there of definite persons or circumstances of the past can be made to refer to persons and circumstances of the present (Rom. viii. 36 ; x. 19-21 ; xi. 9, 10, 26). What was meant of Gentiles can be applied to Jews (Rom. ii. 24), and *vice versa* (Rom. ix. 25 *seq.*) ; Paul can even, as occasion requires, take τὸ πνεῦμα now as collective, and now as personal

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\* We find the same thing already in the discourses of Christ, where different passages are mixed up together (Mark xi. 17 ; *cf.* also 1 Pet. ii. 7, 9), in Matt. xi. 10 and Mark xiv. 27, where the Old Testament passages are changed freely to suit their Messianic interpretation, and in the discourses of the Acts (*cf.* the significant changes in Acts ii. 17 ; iii. 23 ; i. 20).

(Gal. iii. 16; Rom. iv. 13); in 2 Cor. viii. 15 he can give Exod. xvi. 18 an application which suits its language, without considering that, according to their original allusion, these words refer to the gathering of manna, and therefore do not at all admit of the application which he gives them. He does not inquire as to the original meaning of Old Testament expressions; he takes them in the sense which he is accustomed to give to similar expressions, even in the case of such terms as *πίστις*, *κύριος*, *εὐαγγελίζεσθαι* (Rom. i. 17; ix. 33; x. 13, 15), or he gives them a metaphorical interpretation (Rom. iv. 17, 18). Accordingly it is often the most accidental verbal resemblances with which his application is connected (1 Cor. xiv. 21; Eph. iv. 8). At the basis of this practice, however, lies the presupposition that, on one side, the whole of Scripture prophesies of the Messiah and the events of the Messianic time, so that everything which simply admits of being applied to these circumstances is interpreted in this sense, and that, too, as a direct prophecy. Thus, in Ps. lxi. 9, the Messiah Himself is conceived of as speaking (Rom. xv. 3), and Joel ii. 32 is applied by him, as well as by Peter (Acts ii. 21), to the Messiah (Rom. x. 13). Even passages which, like these, are undoubtedly Messianic in the wider sense, appear as having a reference to the person of Jesus, which is originally foreign to them (Rom. ix. 33; cf. 1 Pet. ii. 6).\*

“(d.) From these actual quotations of Scripture we must distinguish those cases in which the apostle avails himself of well-known sacred words of Scripture for the purpose of clothing his own thoughts, as—*e.g.*, in 1 Cor. v. 13; x. 22, 26; Rom. xi. 34, 35; xii. 20; Eph. i. 22; iv. 26. This way of using Scripture is also found already in the discourses of Jesus (Matt. x. 35; Mark iv. 12), and in the Epistle of Peter it is the most common. In such cases, acquaintance with the Scriptural words in question is for the most part taken for granted, and the allusion appears intentional; yet it is a peculiarity of the Epistle of Peter, that even where the line of thought demands that they should be recognised and taken to be words of Scripture (as in i. 24), there is no express quotation formula. There is no example of this to be found in Paul. He even inserts his *καθὼς γέγραπται* where the words are only used as a clothing of his own thought (1 Cor. i. 31). In such a case, naturally, it is by no means surprising if the words of Scripture appear without any reference to their

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\* In the same way, the earliest tradition already makes Jesus give the Old Testament a Messianic interpretation (Matt. xi. 10; Mark xii. 10, 11, 36; xiv. 27), and develop a deeper meaning out of its words (Mark xii. 26); according to the Acts of the Apostles, Peter makes David speak, not only with reference to the person of Jesus (ii. 25-28), but also regarding the traitor (i. 20; cf. v. 16).

original meaning as determined by the context (Rom. x. 18), and if they are altered, with great freedom as each occasion requires (x. 6-8 ; cf. 1 Cor. xv. 55). Since this, however, is done also in the case of actual quotations, and even the presence or absence of a quotation formula is not absolutely decisive, it is often impossible to decide with full certainty which of these uses of Scripture we have before us." \*

The above extract may be relied on as an accurate and unbiassed representation of the state of things revealed by a candid examination of the Old Testament quotations and references found in the New. One or two remarks must be added by way of expounding the bearing of what it contains. It appears that the Apostle Paul, and, we may add, the New Testament writers generally, look at the Old Testament from two different points of view, and attribute to it two different characters. On one aspect, or in one character, it is all *law* ; on another aspect, or in another character, it is all *Messianic prophecy*, which is the same thing as to say that it is all *gospel*. Now, the antithesis between law and gospel, as will be fully explained by-and-by, is an antithesis between dead letter and living spirit. In its character as law, the Old Testament is regarded as having been a means of condemnation, but not a means of salvation. According to the apostolic writers, the Gospel, and the Gospel alone, is a means of salvation, because it alone contains the promise of the Spirit, who can regenerate the human heart. The Old Testament, as law, stands in a purely negative relation to the work of salvation ; it is a mere foil to the Gospel, intended to prepare the way for it, and destined to be set aside in favour of it. The only positive, or *quasi*-positive function that is ascribed to the Old Testament, as law, is the function of shutting men up to embrace the Gospel, and this function it discharges, and can, from the nature of the case, discharge only to those who receive the Gospel. Thus the Old Testament, as law, though it exercised a negative or condemnatory function toward all who ever received it, has *positive* or *saving* value only for *those who receive the Gospel*.

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\* Weiss's *Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, E. T., vol. i. pp. 375-385 (slightly abridged).

For our purpose, however, it is the other aspect of the Old Testament that is by far the most important, because it is that aspect that appears almost solely in the quotations. In its character as Messianic prophecy, or as gospel, the Old Testament has for its subject-matter that which the apostles were called, qualified, and commissioned to teach—viz., the Gospel of Jesus Christ, or the way of human salvation through Jesus Christ. The New Testament writers find in the Old Testament just the import of the Gospel message of salvation as they themselves proclaimed it. The Old Testament in its whole extent—in its history, its institutions, its psalms, its prophecies—speaks directly of Christ and His work as Saviour of the world, and in its character as prophecy, it speaks of nothing else. It is not as if what was originally spoken of some one else might be accommodated and applied to Christ—as if the meaning of Old Testament prophecy were not fully exhausted in the primary reference which was present to the mind of the human author, and as if a further reference to Christ were admitted by the scope of the words used, and intended by the Spirit that inspired them. On the contrary, the Old Testament writers spoke directly of the Messiah and His times, and they knew that the Spirit of God within them was depicting the future Messianic salvation, and that only (1 Pet. i. 12). Moses and David and Isaiah not only wrote of Christ, but they wrote of Him consciously and directly. In different cases the New Testament writers either imply, or endeavour to prove, that they could have written of no one else (Acts ii. 29, 31; viii. 34, 35; Mark xii. 36; Heb. iv. 8; x. 5 *seq.*; 1 Cor. ix. 9, 10). Psalms, like the second, the sixteenth, the twenty-second, the fortieth, the sixty-ninth, the one hundred and tenth, Isaiah liii., and other similar passages, are not thought of as having had a primary reference to some one else than Christ; such a reference would, in many of them (*e.g.*, Ps. xl.; cx.; Isa. liii.) be wholly inadmissible; the reference to Christ excludes any other reference, and renders it quite preposterous. In point of fact, the antiquated notion that Old Testament prophecy, as prophecy, contains two different senses, one of which corresponds to the consciousness of the human author, and the other to the consciousness of the



Divine Spirit that inspired him, accords neither with historical truth, nor with New Testament opinion, but is the fruit of a vain attempt to *rationalise* New Testament exegesis, and bring it into closer approximation, or into less manifest, direct, and irreconcilable antagonism, to historical exegesis. The two senses which the apostles recognise in the Old Testament are not two prophetic senses, but *a prophetic* sense and *a legal* sense ; and with neither of these has the human author almost anything to do ; he is, to all practical intents, the voice or pen-man of the Holy Ghost, who speaks in him, through him, or by his mouth (Acts ii. 16 ; iv. 25 ; xxviii. 25 ; Gal. iii. 8 ; Heb. iii. 7) ; so that what the human author records is not his own thoughts, but the thoughts of the Spirit of Christ, concerning which the prophets had to seek and search diligently before they could perceive even their general drift or reference (1 Pet. i. 11). And the thoughts of the Holy Ghost to which the prophets gave utterance were all of the person, the life-history, and the work of Christ, or of the Divine plan of salvation *in the particular form which it assumed after the Advent of Christ*. It would be incorrect to say that, according to the apostolic writers, the New Testament is germinant, incipient, or rudimentary in the Old ; at least it would be insufficient and inadequate ; for, according to them, the New Testament is not only present in the Old, but it is present in its mature, specialised, or completed form. It is not enough to say that they hold the continuity of the Old and New Testaments. It is not enough to say that they regard the New Testament as the legitimate outcome or development of the Old ; nay, it is altogether incorrect to say so, seeing they do not recognise the idea of development at all. What they hold is not the continuity merely, but the unity of the Old and New Testaments. To their way of thinking, the Old Testament, on one aspect of it, is absolutely identical with the New, and it is precisely this aspect that appears in the quotations. The quotations are, in fact, part of the Old Testament and part of the New at the same time ; being so, and being taken not from one but from every class of the Old Testament writings, they constitute a standing proof of the identity held to subsist between the two. The apostles

would seem almost to reduce themselves to the position of interpreters of the Old Testament; in their opinion the Gospel, the whole Gospel, and nothing but the Gospel is already to be found there.

Still, though the Gospel is everywhere in the Old Testament, it is not everyone who can see it there. The Messianic or prophetic sense of the Old Testament is evident, because specially revealed, to the apostles and prophets of the New Testament times, but it is evident to no one else. In the view of the New Testament writers, the Old Testament, so far, is *not* an intelligible book, written to be understood by ordinary men, and amenable to the ordinary laws of historical interpretation, but a book containing a profound mystery—the Gospel of Jesus Christ—“which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it hath now been revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit” (Eph. iii. 5, 9; Rom. xvi. 25, 26; 1 Pet. i. 12). The Old Testament, that is to say, was not written to be understood by its original readers, but solely by Christian readers, under the guidance of inspired apostles and prophets. The ceremonies of the ritual law were typical of facts and circumstances connected with the Gospel, but they were not perceived to be typical by those who practised them; and they were not intended to be so; for in that case the Old Testament worshippers would not have continued to practise them, any more than the New Testament worshippers continued to do, after their shadowy inanity was perceived (Heb. x. 1 *seq.*). The typical and allegorical meaning of the history was never dreamt of by those who enacted the literal one. Neither the Prophecies (ordinarily so-called), nor the Psalms, nor any other of the holy writings, were understood to have a Christian or Gospel sense by those who first received them; they were simply *law*—nothing more. The Old Testament, in its character as Gospel, or as Messianic prophecy, was not, could not be, and was never intended to be, comprehended by those to whom it was first addressed, but only by us, on whom the ends of the ages are come, and to whom the Gospel has been preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. And, of course, as the Messianic

sense of the Old Testament was concealed from the men of Old Testament times, the Old Testament could not become a means of salvation till New Testament times, when the mystery which had been kept in silence through times eternal was manifested and made known through the Scriptures of the prophets to all nations (Rom. xvi. 25, 26). It is "now" (*scil.* under the Christian dispensation) that "a righteousness of God has been *manifested*, being witnessed by the law and the prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ unto all them that believe" (Rom. iii. 21, 22). Thus, in its character as Messianic prophecy, not less than in its character as law, the Old Testament has *positive* or *saving* value only for *those who receive the Gospel*.

Now, it is needless to say how entirely unhistorical such a view of the Old Testament is. It is doubtful in the extreme whether a single Old Testament text can be regarded as Messianic in the sense in which the New Testament writers regard the whole Old Testament as Messianic. It is certain at any rate—as certain as any fact of interpretation can be—that the immense majority of the texts and passages construed by the New Testament writers in a directly Christian or Messianic sense were never intended by the original writers to convey any such meaning. In very many instances, such a meaning can be extracted from them only by applying the utmost violence to the text, to the grammar, to the lexicography, to the whole context and connection of thought—to any or all of these combined—sometimes even to the extent of completely stultifying them. It is, in fact, perfectly apparent and undeniable, as the author quoted above implies, that the New Testament writers pay not the smallest attention to the historical sense and connection of the Old Testament passages of which they make use, and very little even to the historical words, which they alter, omit, or supplement, whenever it suits their purpose to do so. Nor is this in the least to be wondered at, when we consider the general nature of the apostolic representations touching the Old Testament. The views just described betray themselves at once as being *systematic*, and not historical. The fact that, according to the apostles, the Old Testament has two entirely independent

characters, that it is all law or dead letter for the men of Old Testament times, and all gospel or living Spirit for the men of New Testament times, and that whether as law or as gospel it has positive meaning, interest, and value only for the apostles' own readers, indicates plainly that it is being *systematised*, and used for hortatory or practical purposes. It is quite impossible and incredible that any book, or series of books, should possess the two independent characters which the apostles attribute to the Old Testament. How the apostles came to regard the Old Testament in two such different lights will be more conveniently and more fully explained in another connection. At present it may be sufficient to say, that the Old Testament, as law, or as dead letter, is equivalent to *the religion of revelation, or the method of human salvation, as all but universally conceived in the apostles' own day*; the Old Testament, as gospel, or as living Spirit, is equivalent to *the religion of revelation, or the method of human salvation, as the apostles themselves had experienced it to be in truth*. The great aim of the apostles was to substitute the latter of these conceptions of religion, or of the plan of salvation, for the former; and, in attempting to do this, they are led to represent the Old Testament under the two aspects above set forth, and to argue that under the one aspect it must be abandoned as worthless for saving purposes, never having been given for these but for other and merely transitory purposes, and that under the other aspect it must be received and acted upon as a means of salvation. These, however, are purely artificial modes of conceiving and representing the Old Testament; they are oratorical, not scientific, being adopted to obtain a formal basis for practical exhortations, whose real basis lay in the writers, own mind and experience; neither of them has almost anything in common with a truly historical view of the Old Testament writings. As to the first: if the Old Testament were supposed to have existed during the pre-Christian period merely as law or as dead letter, this would involve the extravagant assumption that no one during the whole of that period was or could possibly be saved. But this assumption is admittedly contrary to the fact. And, therefore, the Old



Testament cannot have existed during the pre-Christian period merely as law or as dead letter. Indeed, the apostles themselves do not maintain their general *à priori* conception of Old Testament religion with anything like consistency, but expressly posit the existence of Old Testament saints strictly so-called, in different places and connections. In what form the Old Testament did really exist during the pre-Christian period, and how much truth there is in the apostolic views, will come up for discussion afterwards. What we are more concerned about now is the other aspect of the Old Testament, in which it is represented as containing in a mystery the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

And this too is wholly unhistorical. How could it be otherwise? If the Old Testament writers embodied plain ideas in language intelligible to their contemporaries, and if the New Testament writers assume that they embodied gospel mysteries in language intelligible only to the apostles and prophets of New Testament times, it is quite impossible that the findings of historical exegesis should coincide with those of Christian exegesis. As a matter of historical fact, patent to every reader, the Old Testament was written for the men of Old Testament times, and was adapted to meet their needs and circumstances, and to guide them in the way of life; whereas, according to the representation of the apostles, the Old Testament, on one entire aspect of it—the only aspect that needs to be taken into account—was written *solely* for the men of New Testament times, and is adapted equally with the New Testament itself to teach them the way of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. How can it be but that methods of interpretation based upon suppositions so directly opposite should yield in the main opposite results? The possibility, the very existence of historical interpretation, depends on the fact that a speaker or writer uses language intelligible to the audience or public whom he addresses. Books that had been committed to writing centuries before they had any interest or any bearing on practical life, before they were even intended to be understood, before the most gifted intelligences could possibly divine their significance,—as some of the Old Testament prophecies, and the New Testament Book of Revelation are still supposed by

many to have been—could not be interpreted on the historical method; their meaning, if not revealed by direct Divine intervention, could only be guessed at by subsequent generations, and the guesses would probably be as numerous as they would certainly be very diverse. What wonder, therefore, that the Old Testament writings, which are manifestly instinct with historical interest and meaning of the most positive kind, should be very different from that which in the New Testament they are represented to be?

It is sometimes said that, if we accept the *principles* on which the New Testament writers quote and interpret the Old Testament, we shall find very few difficulties in their way of dealing with it. But, properly speaking, the New Testament writers have no *principles* of interpretation that can be called their own, any more than they have principles of criticism that can be called their own. So far as they follow a method at all, it is the method current in their day, and common to all their contemporaries. They accept in the main the method and results of the current exegesis, just as they accept the method and results of the current criticism; the only difference is that both in the department of criticism and in that of exegesis the current ideas are to some extent affected and modified by being combined with the fundamental religious ideas which the Apostles had learned from Christ and realised in their own experience. Accordingly, when we come to examine the details of their exegesis, we find it so purely discretionary, and so radically different from ours,—from that on which as applied to New Testament and Old alike our very life and salvation depend,—that there is no saying what recondite meaning they might or might not extract from the plainest and simplest historical statements (*cf. e.g.* Rom. x. 6-8). The only *principle* that can be traced among exegetical phenomena so very diverse, and so peculiarly arbitrary and *unprincipled*, as those which are met with in the New Testament, is that the law and the prophets must somehow bear witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Old Testament must somehow be susceptible of a directly Messianic or Christian interpretation. But this is a purely negative principle. It defines the limits within which the

true interpretation is to be sought or expected, without telling us in any individual case what the true interpretation is. We know henceforth what the New Testament interpretation of an Old Testament passage cannot be—we have practically nothing to guide us in ascertaining what that interpretation actually will be. On the contrary, a study of the instances of Old Testament interpretation contained in the New Testament will convince any one that to have forecast even a tenth part of them would have been an undertaking always hazardous, and for the most part utterly hopeless. Still, the fact that the New Testament meaning is always directly Messianic, while the Old Testament meaning is never, or almost never, directly Messianic, will enable us to formulate a distinct principle on which to interpret the Old Testament language occurring in the New Testament. The principle to which I refer will, at least, have the advantage of accurately representing the facts, of allowing the utmost freedom and scope to the future historical interpretation of the Old Testament, and of relieving us from all anxiety as to the bearing of apostolic exegesis on the integrity and validity of the plan of salvation. The reader will excuse my stating it somewhat bluntly, because a blunt statement will express it more clearly and more forcibly than a softened one. The Old Testament exegesis of the New Testament writers is not exegesis at all, in the proper sense of the word; at least in so far as it is exegesis, it is the exegesis current in their day and common to all their contemporaries, not either a sound exegesis, or an exegesis properly their own. What is peculiar to the New Testament writers, as the inspired organs of revelation, is not their exegesis, but their *fundamental ideas as to the method of human salvation*, and these ideas, instead of being extracted from the Old Testament by the application of exegesis proper, are simply *read into Old Testament quotations and then read out of them again*. The Gospel scheme of salvation, embodied in the several New Testament writings, is in no degree dependent, either for its existence or for its validity, on the Old Testament language by which it is set forth and illustrated, on the reasonings based on Old Testament Scripture by which its authors seek to commend it, on the *quasi* Old

Testament proof adduced to sustain and fortify it. The fundamental ideas of the apostolic writers were derived from an entirely different and quite independent source. The views of the New Testament writers respecting the plan of human salvation are not determined by their views respecting the meaning of the Old Testament; but, conversely, their views respecting the meaning of the Old Testament are determined by their views respecting the plan of human salvation. The ruling soteriological ideas contained in the New Testament lie quite behind the Old Testament forms and phrases in which they are not unfrequently presented. This is proved by the whole method of dealing with the Old Testament pursued by the New Testament writers. For when a man is found habitually straining the natural meaning of language, bending and accommodating it to serve a purpose, or bring out a certain desired result, omitting or supplying, shaping and squaring, as happens to suit the drift of his argument, we know that the man is not extracting ideas from the language, but reading into it ideas derived from other sources; we know, in short, that the man has a *theory* to maintain, and that he is casting about for evidence to support it. When we see a figure thrust into a mould that does not fit it, we know that the form of the figure was not determined by the mould, but in some entirely independent way. Now this is exactly what we find in the case of the New Testament writers. They have a theory or plan of salvation derived from other than Old Testament sources. They have a Gospel of the grace of God, received not through men, not even through inspired men, such as Old Testament prophets, but through revelation of Jesus Christ. And the sole principle that regulates all their appeals to the Old Testament is that of obtaining at whatever cost, support for their own favourite ideas. Instead of drawing their ideas from the Old Testament by the legitimate weapon of historical exegesis, they bring their ideas to the Old Testament, and read them into it, by the help of forced, arbitrary, and unnatural exegesis. For them the Old Testament has almost no meaning and value, except in so far as Christian ideas can be elicited from it, and, in the great majority of cases, this can be done only by first



reading them into it. The consequence is that they are perpetually running their ideas into Old Testament moulds that do not fit them, and clothing their thoughts in Old Testament forms and phrases that were never meant to express them. The author of Hebrews, as we shall show, projects the whole Gospel into the framework of the ritual law, representing the former as a second improved edition of the latter, as a dispensation the same in form but of a higher order, nature, or character; and other New Testament writers follow the same practice on a more limited scale, and with the same end in view.

I say with the same end in view. But what is the end in view? Why should the New Testament writers invoke the Old Testament at all in support of the truths they teach? If their doctrine of salvation was neither drawn from Old Testament sources nor dependent for its validity on Old Testament evidences and confirmations, if the Gospel they preached was sent them direct from God, and was seen intuitively to be absolutely and infallibly true, why should they endeavour to buttress and defend it by the help of Old Testament authority? Why, in particular, should they weaken a cause so strong, by even seeming to rest it on arguments so exceedingly doubtful, by backing it up with an exegesis of so clumsy and questionable a character? The answer to this question is easily given, and it explains still further the peculiar characteristics of apostolic exegesis. The apostles had not merely to reveal the Gospel scheme of salvation to their own and all subsequent ages, but they had to present it in such a form, and support it by such arguments, as should commend it to their more immediate hearers and readers. Notwithstanding its essentially universal character, the Gospel, as it appears in the New Testament, is couched in a particular form, suited to the special circumstances of a particular age and nation. Before the Gospel could reach the hearts of those to whom it was first addressed, prejudices had to be overcome, prepossessions had to be counted on and dealt with. The apostles, in fact, had just to take the men of their time as they found them, adapting their teaching accordingly. Not only so, but there is evidence that the apostles were them-

selves, to a very great extent, men of their own time, sharing many of the common opinions, and even the common prejudices; so that, in arguing *ex concessis*, they were arguing upon grounds that would appear to themselves just and tenable. Now, one of the things universally conceded in apostolic times was the inspiration and authority of the Old Testament; another was the legitimacy of certain modes of interpreting and applying the Old Testament. The later Jews, as is well known, cherished a superstitious reverence and attached an overwhelming importance to the letter of the Old Testament, which they regarded as the "Word of God," in the fullest and most absolute sense that can possibly be put upon such an expression. The doctors taught, and the people believed, that the sacred writings were not only inspired, but inspired to the utmost possible or conceivable extent. In the composition of Scripture, the human author was nowhere, and the inspiring Spirit everywhere; not the thoughts alone, but the very words of Scripture were the words of God, which He communicated by the mouth of the human author, who merely discharged the duty of spokesman and amanuensis; so that what the Scripture contains is the Word of God in as complete and full a sense as if it had been dictated by the lips of God to the human author, and recorded with something approaching to perfect accuracy. In short, verbal inspiration in the hardest, baldest, most mechanical, most rigid and unqualified of forms, ruled it absolutely in the Jewish schools of the apostolic age.\* And with this theory of inspiration was naturally, one might almost say necessarily, associated the typico-allegorical method of exegesis. Verbal inspiration and allegorising exegesis always have gone, and always will go, hand in hand with one another. When "all Scripture" is thought of as immediately "inspired by God," it is necessarily thought of as containing a meaning such as God would communicate, and in virtue of which it is "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim. iii. 16); and, of course, when the literal meaning shows itself to be inadmissible by being trivial, natural, profitless, or otherwise unworthy

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\* See further on this matter, p. 345 seq.

of God, allegorising or typologising exegesis is demanded, and called into requisition, to elicit the deeper meaning of the inspiring Spirit.

Such being the prevalent view of the inspiration and authority of the Old Testament writings, what could be more natural than that the apostles should make use of these writings to enforce and commend their own ideas? And if the Old Testament were to be used for such a purpose at all, evidently it must be used according to the accepted methods; for to have followed any other—assuming the possibility of such a thing—would have defeated the object aimed at, which was to accommodate the Gospel to established prejudices. This explains how the exegesis of the New Testament writers is just the exegesis current in their day, and common to all their contemporaries. The apostles, in all probability, had no idea of any other, but even if they had, they could not have availed themselves of it for the purpose of persuading readers by whom it was not even understood, much less received as valid, and employed as such. To us, no doubt, the exegetical arguments of the New Testament writers appear in most cases to weaken the cause they are meant to establish; but then they were not intended nor adapted for us, but for the writers' own contemporaries, to whom they would doubtless appear solid and satisfactory. If the Gospel had been written in our own time, and addressed to us specifically, it would in that case have been presented in a form, and supported by arguments, suited to convince our understandings, and win our acceptance; but then the form and the arguments might have been found just as unsatisfactory by men a thousand or two thousand years hence as the present form and arguments are found by us now. The New Testament writers, if they were to reason with their contemporaries at all, were bound to begin somewhere; reasoning, to be reasoning, must start from premises, granted either as self-evident, or as already established. When the New Testament writers appeal to the Old Testament, they do so to illustrate, confirm, defend, or enforce their own ideas, and all their reasonings based upon Old Testament quotations and references proceed on the assumption that the current exegetical method was a sound and

reliable one. Any other assumption would have required to be established by separate processes of reasoning, such as the apostles were by no means qualified to undertake, and such as, at anyrate, would have proved utterly unintelligible to the men whom they were designed to convince ; but this assumption, being postulated and granted by friends and opponents alike, could be made use of at once, and to good purpose.

The standpoint of the New Testament writers, with respect to exegetical, may be compared with the standpoint of the Bible writers generally with respect to physical science. It has long since been demonstrated that the Bible can teach us nothing as to the laws that regulate the phenomena of nature. The notions of the Bible writers on the subject are just the notions prevalent in their day, and accepted by them as by every one else ; notions which they avail themselves of with the utmost freedom to illustrate and enforce ideas peculiarly their own. Even the account of creation is just the popular account, controlled by certain governing religious ideas. So in regard to questions of Old Testament criticism. The New Testament can teach us nothing as to the literary history of the Old beyond what is contained in the notions and traditions current at the time when it was written. All the statements and reasonings of all the New Testament writers take for granted the accuracy of these popular notions. The Pentateuch was written by Moses, and the Psalms by David, and Isaiah by Isaiah, because popular opinion had it so. If these popular notions were infallibly correct before they were taken up and embodied in the New Testament writings, they are infallibly correct still ; if they were incorrect before they were taken up and embodied in the New Testament writings, they are incorrect still. So in regard to questions of Old Testament exegesis. The New Testament writers have no independent light to throw on the historical meaning of the Old Testament. Their exegetical notions and methods are just the exegetical notions and methods of their contemporaries. The Bible writers were not commissioned to teach men either physical science, or criticism, or exegesis, but to "preach the Gospel," or communicate the way of salvation. They correct none of the popular critical and exegetical errors that were



abroad. Their attitude toward errors of that description stands in the most marked contrast to their attitude toward fundamental religious or doctrinal errors. Against the latter they wage an incessant and mortal warfare; the former are scarcely if at all mentioned; though it is quite incredible that no such errors should have existed—the opposite is in fact clearly demonstrable. The New Testament writers did not initiate or carry out any reform in the Old Testament of their time. They did not adopt what was good in the popular exegesis, eliminating what was bad. There is not a trace of elimination or correction at all. They did not amend the exegesis of their contemporaries, any more than they amended the textual criticism; and yet there is just as much evidence to show that the exegesis was faulty as there is to show that the textual criticism was so, for the two are inseparably bound up with one another (*cf. e.g., Heb. x. 5, seq.*). No one, reading the New Testament, can fail to be struck with the complete contrast that exists between the feeble and almost puerile character of the exegesis and the profound and powerfully worked out fundamental ideas; nor fail to infer that the proofs and reasonings based upon Old Testament Scripture are mere external drapery, accommodated to the current temporary phase of popular opinion, and that the underlying spiritual truths are alone permanent, essential, and real. The great doctrines of sin and salvation had been reached by the apostles on quite a different line from the exegetical one—they had been discovered by intuition, and verified by experience, as the apostles themselves declare, and as the whole texture of the New Testament shows. The Old Testament proofs are a mere afterthought. The doctrines were not generated by the Old Testament proofs, but, conversely, the Old Testament proofs were generated by the doctrines, a fact which serves to explain their peculiar character. The authority which the apostles received, and which the Master himself possessed, was not an authority to interpret the meaning of the Old Testament. They did not come to restore the Old Testament language to its native purity, and to open its hidden treasures of thought, which men had hitherto failed to reach. The New Testament is not a second edition of the Old, thoroughly revised and corrected,

with an abundance of explanatory notes attached. On the contrary, the authority which the apostles received was an authority to speak the things which they had seen and heard and known and felt; to preach the Gospel to every creature; to be witnesses of Christ and His saving power to the world; to warn every man and teach every man that they might present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. The revelation of grace and truth contained in the New Testament is, I venture to say, entirely independent of anything contained in the Old, and would remain in every one of its features though the latter were swept out of existence.

Starting, then, from these two positions,—which will receive their more complete verification in the sequel,—viz., (1) that it cannot be assumed as a first principle that the sense put upon the Old Testament by the New Testament writers will always and necessarily coincide with the proper historical sense, or, in other words, that the New Testament writers interpret the Old Testament with infallible authority; and (2) that in point of fact the sense put upon the Old Testament by the New Testament writers does *not* as a rule coincide with the proper historical sense, but ideas foreign to the Old Testament are read into it in accordance with the loose popular exegesis of the time:—starting from these positions, we have now to observe their bearing on the interpretation of Old Testament language occurring in the New Testament, and also, more generally, on the attempts that are commonly made to establish New Testament or Christian doctrines by the help of Old Testament or Jewish evidences. And it is obvious that when ideas are read into words which the words were never meant to convey, we cannot hope to reach the ideas by rigidly interpreting the meaning of the words. The ideas must be ascertained through the medium of words framed for the express purpose of conveying them, and the meaning thus ascertained may be compared, though it should not be confounded, with the meaning of the words into which it has been imported. When, therefore, we meet in the New Testament with words, or phrases, or whole passages, borrowed from the Old Testament, when we meet with arguments based upon Old Testament quotations and references, and coloured by what we know

from other sources to have been the forms of thought and opinion current at the time, the task of interpretation is not altogether a simple one. We cannot insist on the exact meaning of the words quoted from the Old Testament; still less can we insist on the whole scope of the Old Testament passage from which the quotation is made; for the New Testament meaning may be quite different, or at least considerably different, from either or both of these. We can neither reason from the historical meaning of the Old Testament to the meaning of the New Testament, as expressed in terms of the Old; nor, conversely, can we reason from the meaning of the New Testament, as expressed in terms of Old Testament quotations, to the historical meaning of the passages quoted, or to that of other similar passages. We may be never so well assured that an Old Testament writer used a combination of words to convey a certain meaning: we cannot infer that a New Testament writer, quoting the words, will put upon them the same meaning. And, again, we may be never so well assured that a New Testament writer, quoting a combination of Old Testament words, puts upon them a certain meaning: we cannot infer that the Old Testament writer used the words to convey that meaning. In interpreting Old Testament quotations, we must proceed on the assumption that the meaning of the Old Testament is one thing, and the meaning of the New Testament another, and that in all probability the Old Testament writer's words do not express the New Testament writer's thought with anything like exactness. The meaning put on an Old Testament passage by a New Testament writer must be elicited, not by a rigid historical, or even grammatical, interpretation of the exact words, but rather by considering the whole context and connexion of thought—the entire drift of the writer's argument—and especially, if that be possible, by comparing the meaning of other passages where the writer expresses his ideas in literal terms framed by himself. It is implied in this, that in seeking to determine the New Testament conception of religion, or of the plan of salvation as a whole, we cannot start from the Old Testament phraseology in which it is sometimes couched; we cannot take as our fundamental passages passages borrowed from the Old

Testament, pressing the strictest and most literal meaning of Old Testament words and phrases, and ignoring entirely, or ruling out of court, those more numerous and far more important passages where the same ideas are embodied in language framed for the express purpose of conveying them. On the contrary, we must adopt a principle and pursue a method precisely the reverse of this. We must start from the language of the New Testament itself, taking as our fundamental passages passages in which New Testament ideas are embodied in strictly New Testament words; and then, having ascertained the ideas, we may employ them, in conjunction with the several contexts, to determine the meaning put upon Old Testament quotations and allusions. And if we do this, the task of interpreting the Old Testament in the New, and of correctly apprehending and defining the plan of salvation, will not, I believe, involve any insuperable difficulty.

This brings us to the most general aspect of the relation between the Old and New Testaments. However deeply-rooted may be the practice of quoting the Old Testament in support of doctrines taught or supposed to be taught in the New, it is a practice attended with serious drawbacks, and one which, if the principles just laid down possess any measure of soundness, cannot well be defended. An example or two will show clearly the nature of the difficulties incident to it. Nothing is more common than to meet in writers on "the Atonement" with a string of quotations from Isaiah liii., introduced under cover of the remark that the chapter is so frequently and so fully quoted as applicable to Christ in the New Testament as to be to all intents and purposes New Testament Scripture. But even if every sentence in the chapter were quoted, and applied to Christ by every one of the New Testament writers, there would still exist an immeasurable difference between it and New Testament Scripture. New Testament language, strictly so-called, is language framed for the express purpose of conveying New Testament thought, that is, among other things, for describing the nature of the work of Christ; but if we may trust the historical indications, including the express and repeated declarations of the writer himself (Isa. xli. 8; xliv. 1, 21; xlix. 3, 5, *cf.* lii. 13, *seq.*), the



language of Isaiah liii. was framed for another and a very different purpose. The fact that Isaiah liii. is applied to Christ in the New Testament no more proves that the language of that chapter was intended by the original writer to describe the work of Christ than the same fact in regard to Psalm xl. 6-8 proves that the bungling and nonsensical translation of these verses by the LXX. was intended to convey the meaning put upon it by the author of Hebrews (x. 5, *seq.*). And if the language of Isaiah liii. was not intended by the original writer to describe the work of Christ, what guarantee have we that it is in the least fitted to do so? The New Testament ideas may be as utterly foreign to the Old Testament language in this case as in cases like Ps. viii.; Ps. xcv.; Ex. xxv. 40; Gen. xxii. 18; Ps. lxviii. 18; Ps. xvi. 10, &c. It would only be in keeping with the whole character and principles of New Testament quotation if the work of Christ, as conceived by the apostles, were clothed in Old Testament forms of speech quite unsuited to the accurate representation of such a thing. Indeed, if the work of Christ be, as theologians represent it to be, absolutely unique, and if the language of Isaiah liii. was originally framed to describe, not the work of Christ, but something else, then it follows of course that the language of Isaiah liii. cannot supply an accurate description of the work of Christ. And if the original sense of the words be different from the ideas imported into them, it is idle to think of establishing the nature of the ideas by strictly interpreting the meaning of the words, that is, it is idle and purposeless to quote the chapter at all. We cannot even define the extent of the difference between the New Testament ideas and the natural sense of the Old Testament words, without, in the first instance, defining the former by means of evidence independent of the latter; and in these circumstances it is *preposterous* to use Isaiah liii. for the purpose of proving the nature of "the Atonement."

Again, to take another example. It is well-nigh universally assumed by the class of writers just referred to, that the Old Testament bloody sacrifices must have been instituted by God to prefigure the work of Christ, because such is the view of

the New Testament writers, that the Old Testament priests must have been appointed and intended to prefigure Christ himself, because such is the view of the author of Hebrews, and, consequently, that both the one and the other, both the priests and the sacrifices, must afford a literally accurate representation of Christ and His work. Accordingly, nine-tenths and more of the evidence adduced in support of the current doctrine of "the Atonement" is drawn, not from the New Testament, not from the proper statements of the apostolic writers, least of all from the statements of Jesus himself, respecting the meaning of His earthly experiences and their bearing on the salvation of men, but either from the Old Testament directly—and this to a very large extent—or from the Old Testament as quoted, interpreted, and applied in the New. But the opinion of the New Testament writers no more proves that the Old Testament bloody sacrifices were intended to foreshadow the saving work of Christ than it proves that all the parts of the earthly material tabernacle were copied from a heavenly immaterial archetype, which Moses saw on the mount. The opinion of the author of Hebrews no more proves that the Old Testament priests were appointed as types of Christ than it proves that Melchizedek was an eternal, self-existent, supernatural being, the prototype of the only begotten Son of God. The view of the writer to the Hebrews as to the priestly character of Christ is avowedly based on Psalm cx. (v. 6; vii. 17, 21), and the Psalm, when interpreted as the author interprets it, involves the absurdly extravagant conception of Melchizedek, whose supernatural origin and destiny, like those of Christ himself, lie at the foundation, and constitute the very essence of his priesthood. Beyond doubt, also, the same author rests his whole case for the typical nature of "the law," or the ritual system generally, on a series of Old Testament passages, which he interprets in his own peculiar Rabbinical style—partly on what is implied in the priestly character of Christ already supposed to be proved from Scripture (v. 5, 6, *seq.*), partly on Ex. xxv. 40 (viii. 5, *seq.*) and Ps. xl. 6-8 (x. 5-7, *seq.*)—the latter of these passages being flagrantly mistranslated after the LXX., and both being palpably misinterpreted—and partly on Jer. xxxi. 31, *seq.* (viii. 8-12,

*seq.*)—a passage in which the prophet *more suo* anticipates that the future Messianic form of the kingdom of God will be much the same as the past and present Sinaitic form. In short (as will be proved in detail hereafter) the whole typological fabric of the epistle is suspended on the popular, artificial, unhistorical interpretation of a few isolated Old Testament texts, into which a meaning is read entirely foreign to the words used in the connection in which they originally stood. It is but stating the bare literal truth to say, that the author's typology has no foundation whatever save in his own imagination, and that the Old Testament passages on which it is professedly based, so far from having been meant to convey the meaning imposed upon them, simply cannot be so understood without committing the interpreter to positions of which it would be difficult to decide whether they are more extravagant in themselves or mutually contradictory in their issues. There is, therefore, no more evidence to prove that the Jewish priests and sacrifices were intended by God to foreshadow Christ and the work of human salvation than there is to prove that the heathen priests and sacrifices were intended by God to do the same. The opinion of the New Testament writers is no evidence that the Old Testament sacrificial system was instituted by God at all, far less is it evidence that it was instituted for such a purpose as is commonly supposed and taken for granted. The opinion of the New Testament writers, if it prove anything, proves a great deal too much, and therefore proves nothing. Whether the Jewish sacrificial system was in fact instituted by God, or whether, like the heathen systems, it grew up naturally, is a point for historical interpretation to settle; *adhuc sub judice lis est*. What can be safely enough affirmed is that the settlement of the question on one side or the other will not in the least affect either the nature or the validity of the saving work of Christ. It will, I believe, be conclusively shown that the New Testament writers, by the help of the current exegetical method, project the spiritual realities of the Gospel back into the physical moulds of the ritual law, and, of course, neither the character of Christ, nor the nature of His work, can be in the least affected by being first read into the Old Testament and then read out of

it again ; nor, consequently, would the plan of salvation be in the least altered or invalidated whatever the historical origin and meaning of the ritual system were proved to be. Only, since there is no more real evidence to prove that the Jewish sacrifices were instituted and intended to prophesy the work of Christ than there is to prove that the heathen sacrifices were instituted and intended to prophesy the work of Christ, since there exists a decided *à priori* presumption in favour of identity of origin as well as identity of meaning in cases so closely analogous, since there is not the slightest indication in any part of the Old Testament that the ritual system had a pregnant prophetic significance, or that it was meant to foreshadow something better and higher than itself, since no one in Old Testament times did or could conceivably have divined such an inscrutable reference, and since the exegetical reasonings of the author of Hebrews, on which the typical interpretation is based, are flagrantly and palpably unhistorical, since they are such as to render it quite obvious that he is reading Christian ideas into the Old Testament instead of extracting them out of it:—in the face of these things it is worse than useless to think of establishing the nature of the Christian scheme of salvation by an appeal to the nature of Jewish sacrifice.

Now, what is true of these two examples is true in an equal degree of the entire Old Testament. From the circumstance that the New Testament writers regard the whole Old Testament as directly Messianic, ignoring anything like development in the attainment of religious truth, they are constantly under the necessity of importing the contents of New Testament revelation into the record of Old Testament revelation. But the principles of scientific exegesis absolutely forbid us to deal with the Old Testament in such a fashion. In seeking to establish Christian doctrine, we must apply the same principles of exegesis to the Old Testament which we apply to the New, that is, we must follow the strict historical method, and renounce entirely the method of the New Testament writers. Even passages of the Old Testament already quoted and interpreted in the New will require to be interpreted afresh, before they can be of any service towards the elucidation and estab-



lishment of Christian ideas. Such being the case, it appears a question whether we ought to mix up the Old Testament and the New at all, or make any attempt by means of the one to establish the doctrines contained in the other. In dealing with the Old Testament, we cannot follow the method (if method it can be called) of the New Testament writers, for that would involve the entire renunciation of the historical method, and therewith the overthrow of all certainty in interpretation, and of the possibility of Christian doctrine ; whilst if we follow the historical method, the utmost confusion is likely to arise. We should then have the New Testament writers quoting texts in support of their doctrine, and we ourselves quoting possibly the same texts but putting upon them a different sense. Besides, the mere fact that the New Testament writers have as a rule to read their ideas into the Old Testament before extracting them out of it ought to convince us that the relation between Old Testament doctrine and New Testament doctrine is not such as to warrant direct proof of the one by means of the other. I do not mean to suggest that there is not essential agreement between the religious systems of the Old and New Testaments ; on the contrary, I hope to contribute something towards setting that agreement on a much broader and safer basis than that on which it at present rests ; but the historical study of the Bible has long since demonstrated that the relation between its two main divisions is much more accurately described by the word continuity than by the word unity. The old theologians, taking their cue from the New Testament writers, read the whole Gospel into the opening chapters of Genesis, and of course into all the succeeding chapters of that and the other Old Testament books ; but the advance of historical exegesis has taught us, their successors, a very different lesson. And it stands to reason that if the New Testament writers themselves could find in the Old Testament support for their peculiar doctrines only by departing from the historical sense, we who keep to the historical sense shall find no support at all. Anyhow, it is certain that if historical interpretation and that alone be applied to the Old Testament, the *direct* support which it will be found to lend to the *characteristic* doctrines of the Gospel

will be reduced within very narrow limits. In that case I am not aware that our knowledge of the Christian plan of salvation would be in the least extended or confirmed by anything contained in the Jewish Scriptures. I believe, in fact, that the New Testament furnishes ample materials for settling the exact nature of the doctrines it was written to teach, and that the Old Testament reveals nothing that is not much more fully and clearly revealed in the New Testament itself. Moreover, anything like mixing up of the two Testaments is to be strongly deprecated in the interests of a correct understanding of both. For it would be difficult to name any single circumstance that has tended more powerfully to retard the progress of the higher exegesis, and even the higher criticism, of the Bible than just the assumption, countenanced by New Testament authority, of an artificial unity or uniformity pervading it from beginning to end. On the one hand, the criticism and exegesis of the Old Testament have been held chained to the critical and exegetical notions prevalent in the days of the apostles; and, on the other hand, the fundamental doctrines of the New Testament have been confounded with the formulæ and rites and symbols of the Old into which they are sometimes read. The only correct assumption is, that the Old Testament or the law is one thing and the New Testament or the Gospel another, that each must be interpreted historically "like any other book," and that the results obtained may be compared, but ought not to be confounded, with one another, as if the subject-matter of the former were obviously and necessarily identical with that of the latter. The reader is not therefore to look in the present work for any references to the Old Testament in proof of the principles which it contains. Such references will, on the contrary, be studiously avoided for the reasons which have been stated. Nevertheless, if the result of our investigations should be to show that there exists complete continuity between the teaching of Jesus and His apostles, when stripped of foreign accretions, and all merely illustrative, oratorical, or other ephemeral elements, and that part of the teaching of Moses and the prophets which has the strongest claim to be regarded as genuine, we may be able to accomplish something, less or more, towards the opening up

of a way for the final solution of complicated and difficult questions of Old Testament criticism now impending.

To return to the Old Testament words quoted above: "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness." Let us see how far the general remarks which have now been made will aid us in the interpretation of them. That these words, when viewed from the strict historical standpoint, not only do not convey, but are positively and irreconcilably at variance with, the opinion that the obedience and sufferings of Christ were imputed to Abraham for righteousness in the first moment of faith, has been already sufficiently shown. Apart from apostolic precedent and authority, no one would have ever dreamt of finding such a meaning in the passage of Genesis from which the words are taken, nor is it conceivable that the author of Genesis could have intended to convey such a meaning. The natural sense of the writer's words is that, when Abraham believed the promise of God, the moral attitude of Abraham's mind was an attitude conformable to the mind and will of God, the standard of moral rectitude, and that the act of faith on the part of Abraham was regarded by God as being what it was, a *righteous* act—Abraham being treated accordingly. It is not meant that a single supreme act of faith was accepted by God in lieu of the perfect obedience of a lifetime, and that Abraham, in all time coming, no matter how he might act, was regarded by God as being perfectly righteous, and treated as such—that were a very strange meaning to put upon words so simple; far less is it meant that the righteousness, or rather the obedience and sufferings, of another party—viz., Christ—were imputed to Abraham from without, so as to become the substitute for his perfect personal righteousness—of that there is not the smallest trace, and the idea might well be considered as not merely extravagant but utterly absurd. All that is meant is that, at the time specified, Abraham, having played a *righteous* part, or done what he ought to have done, was regarded with moral approval or complacency by God.

It does not follow, however, that the simple and natural meaning of the quotation is the meaning put upon it by the

Apostle Paul. On the contrary, there is some reason to think that a special pregnant sense was attached to the words in the popular theology of the day, that the text had become a cardinal text in the Jewish schools at the time when the New Testament was written, that peculiar inferences had been founded, and theories built, upon it, and that the Apostles Paul and James, in each quoting and applying the words to support their respective views, were simply turning to account the method and results of the current exegesis. This, and nothing else, will account at once for the frequency with which the words are quoted, for the pregnant significance always attached to them, and for the fact that the two apostles appear to found on them not only different but almost opposite inferences. And if such were the case, the meaning put upon the words by either apostle is much more likely to be a meaning imported into them than a meaning extracted from them, since it is highly improbable that the peculiar doctrine of either Paul or James, on the subject of justification, was present to the mind of the author of Genesis. Indeed, the mere fact that both writers find support each for his own argument in the same quotation, while the arguments of the two are different, if not opposite, is a sufficient proof that the fundamental ideas of both are entirely independent of the words quoted, and that each is simply *forcing* Old Testament evidence to commend and give weight to his own views and exhortations. But if the ideas of Paul lie quite behind, and are not in the least dependent on, the quotation by which he supports them, then there is no saying from the exact terms of the quotation what his ideas may or may not be. We cannot even be certain that he does not read into the Old Testament words the theological doctrine of imputation, in its special application to the righteousness of Christ, though that doctrine is directly opposed to their plain and obvious meaning. That the Apostle James does not deduce that doctrine from the words which he quotes is universally admitted. Whether James did or did not hold the doctrine of imputation is another matter; as also whether James' view of justification be or be not reconcilable with the view of Paul. Without venturing any opinion on either of these questions at present,



it may be affirmed with the utmost confidence that the inference which James bases on the quotation is not the idea that the obedience and sufferings of Christ were imputed to Abraham in the first moment of faith. James' application of the quotation may be forced and arbitrary enough, but at least he does not apply it so. The meaning he reads into it may be as directly opposed to the natural sense of the words as would be the doctrine of imputation itself, but no one dare pretend that it is actually the doctrine of imputation. And yet even this will by no means prove that the Apostle Paul does not read into the words the doctrine of imputation; only, the fact that he does so will require to be distinctly proved, either from the connection of thought in the present passage, or from other parallel passages.

Little light is cast on the apostle's meaning by the mere repetition throughout the chapter of the expression quoted from Gen. xv. 6. Nor is the matter mended, but rather additional confusion is introduced, by the presence of a second quotation from Ps. xxxii. : "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord will not reckon sin." Theologians infer from these words that the remission or the covering of sins, which is identified with the cancelling of their penalties, is one of the effects of the imputation of Christ's righteousness, the other effect being the acceptance of the believer as righteous in the sight of God, which is equivalent to the conferring of the reward ; that is to say, the sins of the believer are remitted, and he is accepted as righteous by God, *on the ground* that the righteousness [= obedience + sufferings] of Christ has been imputed to him. All this, however, can be extracted from the apostle's language only by a process of manifest distortion, exaggeration, and perversion. In no part of the chapter does the apostle say one word about *Christ's* righteousness; still less, if possible, does he make mention of Christ's *obedience and sufferings*. What he speaks of is simply *righteousness*, and by all the laws of language the word must denote a quality of moral character belonging to the individual of whom it is predicated. Again, the inference that the remission of sins is conditioned by the previous

imputation of righteousness is not only gratuitous, and without warrant in the text, but the opposite inference, that the imputation of righteousness is conditioned by the previous remission of sins, is evidently the correct one. The man "to whom God reckoneth righteousness" is not a man whose iniquities shall on that ground be forgiven, but a man "whose iniquities *have been* forgiven—whose sins *have been* covered." The language of the Psalm, being borrowed language, must of course be interpreted with some caution, but there is no reason to think that in the present instance it expresses the opposite of what the apostle intends. The quotation is obviously introduced as a companion to the other, because the word *reckon* happens to occur in it, and the concluding clause, "to whom the Lord will not reckon sin," is construed as the exact equivalent of the clause above (v. 6), "to whom God reckoneth righteousness." Both clauses describe—the one positively, the other negatively—the permanent relation of God to the believer *after* his sins have been remitted, which means, or at least implies, that they have been entirely removed or done away, and that the believer is now righteous. The non-reckoning of sin to the believer must not be regarded as identical with the remission or covering of sin, but—as the tenses plainly indicate—with the reckoning of righteousness, which latter is neither a single act, nor yet, properly speaking, a series of acts, but a continuous permanent state or attitude of the mind of God toward the believer. It is a grave mistake to suppose that the point of the quotation lies in the first half, which speaks of the remission or covering of sin; rather, the idea of remission is here a purely accessory idea not specially before the writer, who is dealing with the more general question as to the attainment of *positive* righteousness; the real point of the quotation lies in the second half, where the word *reckon* occurs, and the remission of sins after being brought in for completeness' sake, is at once permitted to fall into the background. The meaning is: when the believer's sins *have been* remitted, covered, done away, God regards him thenceforth as righteous—he does not regard him any more as sinful; in other words, God thenceforth reckons righteousness to him—he does not any more reckon sin to him. The imputation of righteous-

ness, therefore, is so far from being the ground of the remission of sins that, on the contrary, the remission of sins is the ground of the imputation of righteousness. And, since the remission of sins (limiting the expression, if you please, to the remission of penalties) is indisputably a life-long process or series of acts in all ordinary cases, it follows that the attainment of righteousness, whatever its method and conditions, must, as to its form, be a life-long process.

Apart from the remission of sins, which is merely accessory to the present passage—though the grounds and manner of it are fully discussed elsewhere—two conditions, a positive and a negative, are specified as preceding the attainment of the righteousness which God reckons. On the one hand, the righteousness is “righteousness of faith” (vv. 11, 13)—faith in “God who quickeneth the dead” (v. 17), who “raised Jesus our Lord from the dead” (v. 24)—faith the same in kind as that which Abraham possessed. The apostle cannot mean by this expression that the righteousness of which he speaks is absolutely identical with the state of mind which we call faith; for, in that case, it would be absurd to discuss the question whether righteousness be or be not attainable by the works of the law as distinguished from faith. The “righteousness of faith” can only mean the righteousness produced by faith, the righteousness which faith is the means of calling into existence, the state of moral character which co-exists with faith; in the apostle’s own language, the righteousness which is “*through* faith in Jesus Christ, unto all them that believe” (iii. 22). Further, the apostle’s idea cannot be the bare historical one that when Abraham believed the promise of God, his state of mind in doing so was regarded by God as a *right* state of mind. The connection makes it quite clear that the righteousness spoken of by the apostle is a universal thing, comparable to that produced by the law when perfectly obeyed, a thing which entitles to the reward of perfect obedience, if not as a matter of debt, at least as a matter of grace; a thing, therefore, which presupposes the complete remission or covering of sin (v. 7). In the quotation from Psalm xxxii. there is no mention of faith directly, but the presence of faith is implied in the fact that sin has been remitted. The

remission, and consequent non-reckoning, of sin, as well as the reckoning of righteousness, are conceived of as having a universal sweep co-extensive with the whole breadth of the law, or with the whole character of the individual. What is remitted and not reckoned is the sum-total of the individual's sins ; what is reckoned is the sum-total of the law's demands, even as it is said elsewhere, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (x. 4).

On the other hand, the righteousness which God reckons is righteousness "apart from works" (vv. 5, 6), apart from circumcision (v. 10), apart from the law (vv. 13, 14 ; iii. 21) —righteousness which may be possessed by parties who have never been circumcised, nor so much as received the law for the purpose of obeying it (vv. 10, 16). In what sense is the righteousness of which the apostle speaks apart from the law? Is it apart from the law in the sense that it does not consist in a state of character corresponding to the import or essence of the law? or is it apart from the law merely in the sense that it does not consist in a state of character called into existence by the letter of the law, *apart from faith and the Divine Spirit which faith appropriates*? In saying that Abraham's righteousness was not from, or through, or by the works of the law, but from, or through, or by faith, does the apostle mean that the righteousness of Abraham differed from ordinary righteousness *in its nature*, or in the fact that it was *not* the well-known quality of moral character which passes under that name? or does he rather mean that the righteousness of Abraham differed from ordinary righteousness *in its origin*, or in the fact that it was created or called into existence by the power of the Spirit of God received through faith, *instead of being created or called into existence by the power of the letter of the law, operating through his flesh or natural humanity*? There can, I think, be no doubt whatever that the latter of these answers is the correct one. The point of the apostle's antithesis is clear: not *from*, or *through*, or *by* the works of the law—meaning especially the external or ceremonial ordinances, which were supposed to be so all-important, and which were really so perfectly indifferent—but *from*, or *through*, or *by* faith ; the Spirit, by whose agency



the "new creature" (Gal. vi. 15) is formed, being received through the latter, not through the former (Gal. iii. 2). This antithesis between what is, or can be, done by human nature in union with the Divine, and what is, or can be, done by human nature in separation from the Divine, measures the whole distance between true religion and false, between dead naturalistic Judaism (*i.e.*, Judaism as it existed in the apostolic age) and living spiritual Christianity; and it is the only antithesis before the apostle's mind. The apostle has no thought of distinguishing between righteousness which is a quality of the moral character of the individual to whom it belongs, and righteousness which is something else; it is not the *nature* of the thing called righteousness that he is concerned to discuss, but the *means* or *method* of attaining to righteousness, the nature of which is presumed to be known. The word righteousness always has the same meaning, and describes that state of the moral character in virtue of which it corresponds to, or meets the requirements of, the law—meaning, of course, the essential element of the law—what we are accustomed to name the *moral*, and to distinguish from the *ceremonial* law, the element that was seen by the apostle, though not by his opponents, to be purely unessential, accidental, or indifferent—to be, in fact, no proper part of the law at all. It is of the very idea and essence of righteousness to be an attribute of a moral character perfectly fulfilling the law, and hence the possession of righteousness by the believer presupposes the complete remission, which implies the entire removal or destruction, of sin (v. 7). Even the righteousness of God or of Christ consists in a state of character answering to the requirements of the law, and is, in that sense, not apart from, but identical with, the works or righteousness of the law. And that the righteousness of faith, spoken of by the apostle, is not different as to its nature from the righteousness of the law, is plain from innumerable passages.

Take, for example, the following: "What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith; but Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness [by natural effort], did not arrive at the law. Where-

fore? Because they sought it not by faith, but, as it were, by works" (Rom. ix. 30-32). Here, evidently, the object which the Gentiles attained, and which Israel sought to attain, but could not, is one and the same—righteousness, the sum of the law's demands: the only difference lies in the means or method of attaining it, which is, on the one hand, *spiritual faith*; on the other, *natural works*. To Israel, the letter of the law had been given, and this had been followed after, obedience having been attempted *apart from faith in God*, with the result that righteousness, or true spiritual obedience, had not been attained. The Gentiles, to whom the letter of the law had not been given, who could not therefore follow after righteousness by attempting to obey the law apart from faith in God, believed the Gospel of Christ, and so attained to righteousness, or true spiritual obedience, *apart from the works of the law*. The Gentiles, that is to say, attained by Divine grace and strength, and *without* ceremonial observances, to that which the Jews unsuccessfully sought to attain by natural effort, and *with* ceremonial observances. The obedience or righteousness of the former was the fruit of the Spirit, received from God by faith, and was a real fulfilment—only, of the kernel or *moral* part—of the law; the obedience or righteousness of the latter was the fruit of the flesh, received from nature apart from faith, and was a real fulfilment—only, of the husk or *ceremonial* part—of the law (Gal. iii. 2, 3; Phil. iii. 3-14). In the one case, therefore, righteousness *was* attained, *by* faith, *apart from* the works (*scil.* the ceremonial works) of the law; in the other case, righteousness *was not* attained, *by* the works (*scil.* the ceremonial works) of the law, *apart from* faith.

Again: "For circumcision indeed profiteth if thou be a doer of the law; but if thou be a transgressor of the law thy circumcision is become uncircumcision. If, therefore, the uncircumcision keep the ordinances of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be reckoned for circumcision? And shall not the uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge [=condemn] thee, who with the letter and circumcision art a transgressor of the law? For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of

the heart, in the spirit; whose praise is not of men but of God" (Rom. ii. 25-29). "We are the circumcision, who serve God [= fulfil the law] by the Spirit of God, and glory in Christ Jesus, having no confidence in the flesh" (Phil. iii. 3). These verses bring out clearly the fact that "neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature," created by the Divine Spirit, received through "faith which worketh by love," the true, and only true, "fulfilling of the law" (Gal. vi. 15; v. 6, 14); in other words, that observance of the ceremonial law is a matter of perfect indifference, and that the sole requisite to acceptance with God is regeneration—circumcision of the heart or spirit—as the source of obedience to the moral law. The points of antithesis are: man in the flesh or the state of nature—circumcised in accordance with the injunctions of the ceremonial law—failing to keep the ordinances of the moral law—condemned before God: man in the spirit or the state of grace, regeneration, or renewal—uncircumcised in spite of the injunctions of the ceremonial law—keeping the ordinances of the moral law—justified before God. The righteousness attained in the one case is the man's own, being produced by the power and working of his flesh or natural humanity—the corresponding reward being conferred as a matter of debt, and not as a matter of grace. The righteousness attained in the other case is not the man's own, but God's or Christ's, being produced by the power and working of the Spirit of God or of Christ—the corresponding reward being conferred as a matter of grace, and not as a matter of debt. Agreeably to this, it is said elsewhere: "Not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to His mercy He saved us, *through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost*, which He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, *that being justified by His grace* we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus iii. 5-7). That the points of antithesis in Rom. iv. are the same as in these passages is evident, not only in general from the closeness of the parallelism, but in particular from the fact that the apostle finds a decisive proof that Abraham's righteousness was attained by grace and faith as distinguished from the works of the law in the

circumstance that it was attained before, and not after, he was circumcised ; if observance of the ceremonial law were—what Paul's opponents imagined and alleged it to be—an essential condition of salvation, or of acceptance with God, Abraham could not have been reckoned and pronounced righteous by God while still in uncircumcision. What could be more manifest, therefore, than that the position which the apostle is engaged in combating is not that righteousness consists in a new moral character, or in obedience to the moral law, but rather that obedience to the ceremonial law is essential to true righteousness, or to salvation ? On the latter point the apostle maintained the negative ; his opponents the affirmative.

Once more : “ Not the hearers of the law are righteous before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified ( . . . ) in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel ” (Rom. ii. 13-16). “ By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified before Him ; for through the law cometh the knowledge of sin ” (iii. 20). These two passages, when taken together, express as distinctly as human language could express, in what precise sense the righteousness on which the completed justification of the believer will turn is and is not the work of the law. It is *not* the work of the law in the sense that it is peculiar to the hearers of the law, being called into existence by the power of the letter of the law ; on the contrary, the letter of the law, operating as the letter must operate through the flesh, or natural humanity, “ could not ” call it into existence (viii. 3) ; the letter of the law sufficed merely to call into existence the knowledge of sin (iii. 20), or to work wrath (iv. 15) ; so that by the works of the law *in this sense* “ no flesh can be justified.” It *is* the work of the law in the sense that it consists in being and doing what the law demands as opposed to being and doing what the law forbids (ii. 13), in fulfilling the ordinance or essence of the law, by being in the Spirit and walking after the Spirit, instead of being in the flesh and walking after the flesh (viii. 4), in living the new life proper to the new creature, so that the law as a condemning power is excluded, and justification is the necessary, though gracious, result (Gal. v. 16, 23, 13, 14).



Above all: "Was not Abraham, our father, justified by works, in that he offered up Isaac, his son, upon the altar? Thou seest that faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect; and the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, 'Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness, and he was called the friend of God.' Ye see that by works a man is justified, and not only by faith. . . . For, as the body, apart from the spirit, is dead, even so faith, apart from works, is dead" (James ii. 21-26). "We, being Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, yet, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, save through faith in Jesus Christ, even we believed on Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the law; because by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified" (Gal. ii. 15, 16). These quotations, again, read as if framed for the express purpose of defining the righteousness which justifies in its relation to the works of the law. The works of the law, by which no flesh can be justified, are the works of "Jews by nature," to whom, as opposed to the Gentiles, the letter of the law was given—the works done by men in their fleshly natural state, antecedent to and independent of faith (*ἐὰν μὴ διὰ πίστεως*)—works which, while mainly and characteristically ceremonial, are exclusively dead, external, and unspiritual. The works by which a man is justified—by which Abraham, in particular, was justified—are works subsequent to and springing from faith—works of which faith is the source, the soul, the animating principle, and by which it is completed or made perfect—works done in the renewed spiritual state which faith, appropriating the Divine Spirit, is the means of calling into existence—fruits of the Spirit or new creature, conformed to the image of Him that created him, where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond-man, free-man, but Christ is all and in all (Col. iii. 9-11; Gal. iii. 28, 29). These works satisfy what the Apostle Paul speaks of as the "ordinance" (Rom. viii. 4), "ordinances" (ii. 26), or essential moral parts of the law, which are summed up "in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself"

(Gal. v. 14)—in contradistinction to the merely accidental or unessential ceremonial parts, such as the oft-mentioned rite of circumcision (Gal. ii. 3, 4; v. 3), eating with Gentiles (ii. 12, *seq.*), observing days and months, and seasons and years (iv. 10), &c. It was against unqualified submission to these latter, as necessary to salvation, that Paul waged a warfare so deadly, because, when a man was found taking his stand upon rites and ceremonies, which were matters of absolute indifference, as if they were quite essential and indispensable, it was a sure token to the apostle's mind that he was falling back into a religion of pure naturalism, in which faith, and fellowship with God, and true moral righteousness, had no place. "Behold, I, Paul, say unto you, that if ye receive circumcision, Christ will profit you nothing. Yea, I testify again to every man that receiveth circumcision, that he is a debtor to do the whole law [in his own natural fleshly state (vi. 12)]. Ye are brought to nought from Christ, ye who would be justified by the law; ye are fallen away from grace. For we, *through the Spirit [received] by faith*, wait for the hope of [perfected] righteousness" (Gal. v. 2-5). Nothing could be more evident than that the antithesis here is between naturalism and spiritualism, or between what can be attained by man "in the flesh," which means apart from Christ, and what can be attained by man "in the Spirit," which means in union with Christ; there is no trace of an antithesis of any other kind, such as between a righteousness that is subjective or inherent, and a righteousness that is objective or imputed; such an antithesis would have been utterly meaningless and out of place, since it would not have touched the question at issue between the apostle and his opponents, which bore, not on the subjectivity or objectivity of true righteousness, but on the transitoriness or permanence of the *ceremonial* law (Acts xv.) It was because the ceremonial law belonged to the sphere of naturalism, or to "the elements of the world" (iv. 3), and tended to keep those who practised it in that sphere and away from Christ, that the apostle felt bound to join issue against it. When ceremonial observances, of which the type was circum-

cision, were clearly perceived to be matters of indifference, the apostle had no objection to practising them ; for then it was distinctly understood both wherein salvation consisted, and how alone it could be attained—that neither was circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature (vi. 15), faith working through love (v. 6), or the keeping of the commandments of God (1 Cor. vii. 19)—that is, the precepts of the *moral* law. Only when it was put forward as the main part of true righteousness, or as a thing absolutely necessary to salvation, did the ceremonial law come to be stigmatised as a “yoke of bondage,” from which Christ had set His people free (Gal. v. 1), because only then did it become really inimical to the existence and prosperity of true religion. And, of course, nothing but the practice of the *ceremonial* law is ever so stigmatised. Such language is never applied, and could not possibly be applied, to what is essential and enduring in the law, when viewed by itself or in separation from what is unessential and evanescent—which, however, it would be if men were, as Luther imagined they were, justified by faith *alone*.

In one point, indeed, Luther is to be commended as having seen much deeper than the bulk of his followers, proximate as well as recent. He saw that his doctrine was as directly contradicted by the language of the epistle of James as human language could contradict it, a truth which three centuries and a half has hardly sufficed to teach them. Justification is not by faith *alone*, if by that is meant that faith is the sole subjective condition on the ground of which a man is pronounced righteous ; but it is, if you please (and this was what Paul’s opponents denied, virtually if not openly and explicitly), *not through the law alone*, but through faith—meaning thereby that not merely or chiefly the law, but faith appropriating the grace or Spirit of Christ, is the means of calling into existence the state of character on the ground of which a man is pronounced righteous. That the moral part of the law also had a function in the production of righteousness is expressly and repeatedly asserted by the Apostle James, and is only apparently denied by Paul, when he contemplates the whole law as dead letter, and the moral part as merged or lost in the ceremonial.

This mode of contemplating and representing the law, which is so common with Paul, and so familiar to his readers, is, however, purely artificial, as will be proved distinctly hereafter, and as appears from the fact that the apostle himself never abides by it, but winds up almost every epistle with a series of moral precepts and injunctions, or with a general exhortation to obey the moral law as a whole (*e.g.*, Rom. xiii. 8-10 ; Gal. v. 13-15). It was only the ceremonial law that was essentially dead or naturalistic, the moral was so merely through association, that is, through being overshadowed and, as it were, obliterated by the ceremonial; and hence it was only the ceremonial law from which the apostle's readers really required to shake themselves free, for it alone tended to prevent them from seeking and receiving the Spirit of Christ. When Paul says "apart from the law," he means apart from the dead or naturalistic law-observance which prevailed in his own day, and this is equivalent to "in union with the Spirit of Christ" as the principle of living spiritual law-observance—"the keeping of the commandments of God" (1 Cor. vii. 19). The apostle's opponents were emphatically law-observers, bent on imposing, alike on themselves and on others, not merely or chiefly the essential moral part, but the unessential ceremonial part as well, and on working out salvation in their own proper strength by means of the law alone, apart from the Spirit of God or of Christ. With them, therefore, Paul had merely to prove that justification was *not through the law alone*, and consequently not through the ceremonial part of the law at all, which could be obeyed perfectly by men in their natural state, and of which faith took no cognisance. James, on the other hand, had to deal with men who held, not merely in theory (as Luther did), but also in practice (as Luther happily did not do), that justification is by faith *alone*, and that a man's standing before God was not in the least dependent on the state of his personal character. James, therefore, without by any means repudiating the truth on which Paul insisted so strongly, that justification is not through the law alone apart from faith in Jesus Christ, had to bring into prominence the correlative and complementary truth, that justification is (in spite of



Luther) *not through faith alone* apart from works of the law. The different stand-point of the two writers is clear from the way in which they severally contemplate the law. Paul regards the law as a dead letter, completely divorced from faith and the Divine Spirit which faith appropriates, and he has in view chiefly and characteristically the ceremonial law. James regards the law as living and operative as a means of salvation—united to faith and the Divine Spirit which faith appropriates—and he has in view exclusively the moral law. The view of Paul, in so far as it merges the moral law in the ceremonial, is purely artificial. The view of James is real, being quite identical with that contained in the Sermon on the Mount, to which the epistle of James has so many affinities. The latter apostle dwells on the place and function of the law as a means of attaining to righteousness: “He that looketh into the perfect law, the law of liberty [= the *moral* law—stripped of the ceremonial “yoke of bondage” (Acts xv. 10; Gal. v. 1, &c.)], and so continueth, being not a hearer that forgetteth, but a doer that worketh, this man shall be blessed in his doing [= shall be justified (*cf.* Matt. v. 3, *seq.*)] . . . If ye fulfil the royal law according to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well [= are righteous], but if ye have respect of persons, ye commit sin, being convicted by the law as transgressors [= being condemned]. For whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet stumble in one point, he is become guilty of all. For he that saith, Do not commit adultery, saith also, Do not kill. Now if thou dost not commit adultery, but killest, thou art become a transgressor of the law. So speak ye, and so do, as men that are to be judged [= justified or condemned] by the law of liberty” (i. 25; ii. 8-12). In the face of such statements as these, who shall dare to assert that the believer’s standing before God, whether in this life or at the final judgment, is independent of, and not rather wholly dependent on, his personal character? or to maintain that the righteousness on which justification is based is not as real a fulfilment by the party justified of the moral law as the sin on which condemnation is based is a real transgression by the party condemned of the same moral law? James’ position is exactly that of Jesus

Himself in the Sermon on the Mount. He denies that mere faith, even if a man had it, could save him apart from works (ii. 14); faith in itself is dead (v. 17, 26), barren (v. 20), profitless (v. 16). He does not merely maintain, as Luther maintained, that living or saving faith will infallibly produce works. To him that would have appeared an identical proposition, for he holds that living or saving faith *is* loving or working faith, and that faith, if it be not loving or working, is neither living nor saving, but dead and damning (v. 19). He holds, moreover, that faith is supplemented or perfected by works (v. 22), and that men are justified expressly on the ground that they possess works in addition to faith (v. 24)—both which points Luther emphatically denied. The only thing that has any appearance of lending support to the view of Luther is the exact terms of the quotation from Genesis, which Paul and James alike make use of to confirm their own ideas; but even Luther would have been obliged to admit that the exact terms of the quotation did not express his doctrine, without being essentially modified by having read into them, if not the works of the believer, at least the works or righteousness of Christ; and, of course, as soon as we desert the exact grammatical sense of the quoted words, we must decide upon other than fanciful grounds what sense is read into them—a thing which Luther unfortunately did not do.

There is still one text of which some notice must be taken before we sum up our remarks on the present chapter of Romans. "Now, to him that worketh the reward is not reckoned as of grace, but as of debt; but to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness" (vv. 4, 5). The words, "that justifieth the ungodly," are often quoted by Protestant theologians with an air of affected triumph, as if they amounted to an absolute demonstration in favour of the doctrine of imputed righteousness, as if they were utterly inexplicable on any other doctrine, and as if the whole gigantic mass of imputation theology could be supported on this single expression. But it is surely evident that if these words prove anything in favour of imputation, they prove a great deal too much. Strictly interpreted, the words would imply that

“there is no difference” between the believer and the unbeliever in respect to godliness or ungodliness, that both alike may be described by the epithet *ungodly*, and that the usual designation of the believer in the New Testament—*saint* (ἅγιος) or *righteous* person (δίκαιος)—is identical in meaning, or is quite interchangeable, with the usual designation of the unbeliever—*ungodly* person (ἄσεβης) or *sinner* (ἁμαρτωλός). Turn, for example, to the following chapter, where we find the ordinary usage of the words. “For while we were yet weak [=unbelievers], in due season Christ died on behalf of the *ungodly*. For scarcely for a *righteous* man will one die; for peradventure on behalf of the good some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet *sinner*s [=unbelievers] Christ died on our behalf. Much more, then, being now justified [=believers = righteous persons] in His blood, shall we be saved from the wrath through Him. For if, while we were *enemies* [=unbelievers = ungodly persons], we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled [=believers = righteous persons = *friends*], shall we be saved in His life” (vv. 6-10). These verses—and quotations of a similar kind might be multiplied almost indefinitely—teach, in the most explicit manner, that the justified believer, so far from being an ungodly person, a sinner, an enemy to God, is separated by an unmeasured gulf (πολλῷ μᾶλλον) from the unbeliever, who *is* an ungodly person, a sinner, an enemy to God. I challenge any man to produce a single example from the whole New Testament of a believer being spoken of as an *ungodly* person, or anything like it. There is none. The thing goes without saying. How absurd would it be to speak of Abraham, for example, as an *ungodly* man! And yet it is just Abraham of whom the apostle is speaking in the previous chapter. We feel instinctively that the apostle cannot, in this single instance, be departing from his own and other writers’ invariable usage, so as to speak of the believer in Christ as an ungodly person. The expression, “God justifieth the ungodly,” is plainly in the nature of a paradox, which must be resolvable like other paradoxes; and theologians feel this as much as I or any one else. They know that God could not pronounce

the believer righteous, unless he were in some sense righteous; they know, also, that righteous is the opposite of ungodly. It is not pretended that the act of justifying *confers* righteousness on the believer, or, in other words, that to justify means to make or constitute righteous. On the contrary, it is strenuously maintained that to justify is merely to recognise or acknowledge the righteousness which faith has already apprehended. If, therefore, the epithet ungodly is applicable to the believer at the moment of justification, the epithet righteous must be applicable to him at the same moment: that is, the believer must be an ungodly-righteous person. How can this be?

Theologians resolve the paradox by saying that the believer is "in himself" ungodly, not being ungodly in the absolute sense like the mere unbeliever, but, on the contrary, being in a sense righteous. The words "in himself" are not, of course, to be found in the text of Scripture. They are imported from without for the purpose of explaining away the simplest and most obvious meaning of the expression, "God justifieth the ungodly," which, on the face of it, is felt to be utterly paradoxical and untenable. It does not, however, appear why these particular words should be supplied by way of explanation, rather than something else. Why, for example, should we not be allowed to suggest that, as Christ died on behalf of the ungodly, so God justifies the ungodly, but not *while* they are ungodly—only after they have become righteous? God is sometimes said to save sinners from the wrath to come, but how preposterous would it be to infer from this that He saves them *while* they are sinners, and not after they have become saints! No writer can be perpetually throwing in *caveats* to guard himself against inferences which, on the face of them, are utterly absurd; their own absurdity is a sufficient proof that they are unwarranted. The apostle has been speaking of what Abraham attained "according to the flesh" (v. 1), that is, in his natural state, apart from faith in God. He is discussing the possibility of a man—especially a Jew, a natural descendant of Abraham, a circumcised person—working himself into a justifiable state by mere obedience to the letter of the law *apart from faith in Jesus Christ*. What he says



about the law and works always has this meaning and implication. Witness—*e.g.*, “The law is *not of faith*, but the man that doeth them [by natural effort] shall live in them” (Gal. iii. 12); and again, “If they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void [*being dispensed with entirely*], and the promise is made of none effect” (Rom. iv. 14). The apostle denies that what his opponents were attempting, and leading others to attempt, was possible, and asserts that God justifies the ungodly *without the intervention of such “doing the best he can” in his fleshly or natural state*. But it is distinctly stated that faith is needful before a man can be justified, and, though not distinctly stated in this particular passage, where the language is moulded on an Old Testament quotation, it is implied that faith justifies, not in and of itself, but because it is the means of appropriating the Divine Spirit, and calling into existence the justifiable state of character, which the law apart from the Divine Spirit could not call into existence (Rom. viii. 3, 4).

I would not, however, be understood to quarrel with supplying the words “in himself” for the purpose of resolving the apostle’s paradoxical expression, provided we use these words in their proper apostolic sense. The phrase “in himself” is no doubt meant to suggest as its correlative the phrase “in Christ,” the complete thought being that the believer can be at once righteous and ungodly by being ungodly in himself—righteous in Christ. Now, the phrase “in Christ,” as will be proved by-and-by, corresponds exactly to the phrase “in Adam;” and as “in Adam” means in Adam’s nature, in a nature, or character, or constitution derived from Adam, and identical with his, so “in Christ” means in Christ’s nature, in a nature, or character, or constitution derived from Christ, and identical with His. “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature—created in righteousness and holiness of truth—after the image of Him that created him” (2 Cor. v. 17; Eph. iv. 24; Col. iii. 10). And, further, as the believer is righteous only in Christ, not in himself, so he can be justified only in Christ, not in himself, seeing he is pronounced righteous expressly on the ground that He is righteous. “There is now no condemnation,” but only “to them that are *in Christ*

*Jesus*” (Rom. viii. 1). Believers “seek to be justified,” but only “*in Christ*” (Gal. ii. 17), in whom alone they can become righteous (2 Cor. v. 21). It follows, that so far as the believer is *in himself*—that is, in *his own* nature, or character, or constitution—so far he is *not* justified, but lies under sentence of condemnation; the old “creature” in every believer, so far from being justified *in Christ*, is actually in process of being destroyed by suffering death, the wages or penalty of sin. Thus, on the showing of theologians themselves, the justification of the ungodly, in the strict and proper sense of the words, is a morbid dream of the imagination. If the Apostle Paul were to rise from his grave, how would not his hair stand upon end to find that his meaning had been so absurdly misapprehended!

Such, then, so far as can be gathered from the whole context and connexion of thought, is the larger meaning which the apostle reads into the Old Testament words which he quotes and reasons upon in Rom. iv. It cannot be denied that there is a good deal of awkwardness in the form of expression and reasoning throughout the chapter; but this is unavoidable, when the apostle is reading general or universal ideas into words that were meant to express special or particular ideas. The faith of Abraham spoken of in the words quoted was an isolated exercise of belief, accorded to a particular promise of God at the time when it was given; the faith of which Paul speaks is a life-long exercise or attitude of mind toward the person of Jesus Christ, a life-long belief in “the witness which God hath witnessed concerning His Son” (1 John v. 10). The righteousness of Abraham spoken of in the words quoted was the correlative of his faith, being an isolated individual righteous act or phase of character, which conditioned or gave birth to the act of faith; the righteousness of which Paul speaks is likewise correlative to the faith of which he speaks, consisting in a universally righteous character, called into existence in a life-long process, and sustained at every step by the living breath of faith. Again, the fatherhood promised to Abraham was a natural fatherhood of many nations of earth-born men; the fatherhood which Paul attributes to him, in accordance with his other ideas, is a spiritual

fatherhood of many nations of heaven-born men. The inheritance promised to the natural seed of Abraham was the earthly Canaan; the inheritance promised to the so-called spiritual seed of Abraham is heaven. The belief of Abraham was a belief in God's power to quicken what was as good as dead; the belief of which Paul speaks is a belief that God has already quickened and raised up Jesus Christ from the dead. The apostle adds, "Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, but for our sakes also" (vv. 23, 24),—with what measure of truth let the reader himself judge.

Still, though the apostle undoubtedly reads universal spiritual ideas into the particular Old Testament statement, there is no trace anywhere of the notion that the obedience and sufferings of Christ are thought of either as having been imputed to Abraham, or as being imputed to each believer after the example of Abraham, in the first moment of faith. There is not a particle of evidence that such a notion ever entered within the horizon of Paul's, much less of James', imagination. On the contrary, there is every evidence that it did not, since it would be destitute of all relevancy, having no points of contact with the forms of thought and opinion current in the apostolic age, which Paul must be supposed to be here refuting. There is not a safer or more reliable rule, in seeking to determine a controversial writer's meaning, than to consider the precise doctrine or opinion against which his argument is directed, and this test, when applied in the present instance, absolutely forbids the idea that Paul says one word about true righteousness being objective or imputed instead of being subjective or inherent; it rather points to the fact that he is discussing the true method of attaining to righteousness, which he asserts to be the method of spiritual descent and spiritual obedience through faith in Jesus Christ, instead of the method of natural descent and natural obedience through Abraham and the law, especially the ceremonial law. The latter method was adopted and defended by the bulk of the "Jews by nature," the natural seed of Abraham, who prided themselves on what they were "according to the flesh" (Matt. iii. 9; Phil. iii. 3, *seq.*); the former was espoused by Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles, who exerted all his logic and

all his energies in demolishing and discrediting the other,—in doing which he was merely following in the wake of John the Baptist and Jesus Himself.

If the foregoing discussion has failed to convince the reader as to what the precise meaning is which the Apostle Paul puts upon the words, “Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness,” the only way in which I can hope to give him satisfaction is by concentrating upon the chapter now examined the light reflected from a more general and extended consideration of the apostle’s doctrinal system. Meanwhile, there is one general reflection, that cannot but suggest itself, after much that has now been said. We have seen that the direct evidence in favour of the doctrine of imputation is practically confined to Rom. iv., that the word *reckon* or *impute* occurs nowhere else in the alleged sense and connection, except as a repetition of the language of this chapter. We have seen that the form of the language in Rom. iv. is completely dominated and determined by that of the Old Testament quotation occurring at the opening of the chapter, and lying at the basis of the reasoning. And we have seen that the quotation, when strictly interpreted, not only does not agree, but is positively and irreconcilably at variance, with the theory which it is adduced and required to sustain. But, if these things must be admitted, who does not see that the direct Scripture evidence in favour of imputation vanishes into thin air? The doctrine of imputation may be based upon anything or nothing else; it cannot be based on the exact phraseology of Rom. iv.; for the language of that chapter is moulded on the quotation, and the grammatical sense of the quotation is inconsistent with the doctrine of imputation. But, if the exact phraseology of Rom. iv. must be discounted in any attempt to establish the doctrine of imputation, then we are reduced to this position. The use of the word *impute* is practically confined to a single chapter. In this chapter it occurs only in Old Testament quotations. Even these quotations do not express what is required; a meaning has to be read into them, drawn from other sources, otherwise they would contradict the very doctrine



they are supposed to teach. That is to say, the meaning of the only passage where the word *impute* occurs must be determined through the medium of other passages where *no such word is to be found*. This implies that the whole fabric of imputation-theology is one gigantic mass of inference or assumption, that it is all—positively all—*read between the lines*.

Possibly it will be said that the doctrine may still be taught in the New Testament, though the precise term is never used. The Bible is not a hand-book of systematic theology. It affects nothing like scholastic precision in its definitions. It observes neither studied uniformity nor scientific exactness in the expression of spiritual truth. If the idea of imputation is contained in the New Testament, what does it signify that the doctrine is never expressed in so many words? Allegations such as these are frequently made, and, doubtless, have their place in the minds of many; yet, on the face of it, the main assertion is utterly incredible. Surely it is inconceivable that a doctrine involving consequences so fundamental and far-reaching—a doctrine that touches and transforms more or less materially well-nigh every aspect of the system of revealed truth—should never have found articulate expression in any part of the New Testament! Names are things. The connection between thought and language is so intimate, that every modification of the latter, no matter how slight it may be, is almost certain to be represented by a corresponding modification of the former. As has been well said, probably no two words in any language are absolutely synonymous; and the same is true of combinations of words. How, then, can it possibly be pretended that a complete system of soteriology lies imbedded in the New Testament, while the word which forms the hinge of that system is nowhere to be found? The statement that the New Testament is not a hand-book of systematic theology is but very partially correct; the first eight chapters of the Epistle to the Romans have, at least, the air of a systematic treatise. The statement that the New Testament writers do not observe a studied uniformity in their phraseology is perfectly true, and nothing to the

purpose. No one denies that the Gospel scheme of salvation is presented under a variety of aspects, and a corresponding variety of forms of expression: the point is, whether the word, which, on supposition that the theory of imputation were correct, would be the most important soteriological term in the New Testament, is never once to be found there? On the other hand, it has yet to be proved that the New Testament writers do not express spiritual truth with substantial precision. If the New Testament is to be dealt with "like any other book," we must assume that the fundamental ideas of the several apostolic writers are perfectly precise, that they are susceptible of strict definition, that we may determine with absolute certainty what they are and what they are not, and whether the various authors do or do not agree with themselves and with one another. A writer's exact words are for us the decisive expression of his thought, and no one has a right to charge him with vagueness, vacillation, or want of precision, without making good the charge. Besides, the doctrine of imputation is itself a thoroughly definite and precise doctrine, which, if taught in the New Testament at all, can only be taught in thoroughly definite and precise terms. Generality, vagueness, or vacillation of thought and expression in the New Testament might be an excuse for declining to hold any definite doctrinal system; it can be no reason, but rather the reverse of a reason, for holding a system so peculiarly definite and so fully developed as that whose key-note is imputation.

It may be added, that men who deny to the New Testament writers a definite system of thought, have, in general, a perfectly definite system of their own, for which they endeavour, as far as possible, to obtain New Testament support; whilst those who take refuge in mere generalities, or unintelligible crudities, on the ground that it is *impossible* to systematise Christian doctrine, merely express in another form that THEY—to whom presumably all power in heaven and on earth has been given—have never been able to give us any substantial assistance in that direction.

## CHAPTER III.

INDIRECT SCRIPTURE EVIDENCE IN FAVOUR OF  
IMPUTATION.

IN view of the conclusion which has just been reached, something must now be said as to the grounds on which the word *impute* is superadded to words, and read into texts and passages, where it does not at all appear, either in the Greek original or in the English version.

Every one who has looked into any of our orthodox theological systems, particularly where the subject of justification happens to be under discussion, must have met very frequently with the two combinations imputed-righteousness and imputed-sin; and though the corresponding adjectival forms are not so commonly met with, it would be easy to show that imputedly-righteous and imputedly-sinful are just as necessary in the interests of theory as imputed-righteousness and imputed-sin. Now, it is needless to say that none of these qualified or composite forms have any place in the letter of the New Testament. There we find simply righteousness (*δικαιοσύνη*), and sin (*ἁμαρτία*), righteous (*δίκαιος*), and sinful or sinner (*ἁμαρτωλός*). And the ordinary signification of these antithetical terms is beyond all dispute. They each describe a state of moral character bearing a certain specific relation to the law, or will, or character of God—the one the relation of correspondence, the other the relation of opposition or non-correspondence. Sin is equivalent to lawlessness (1 John iii. 4), or to unrighteousness (v. 17); and the opposite of this is righteousness, which is convertible with law. The law is a law of righteousness (Rom. ix. 31), and righteousness is the righteousness of the law (viii. 4)—the end or requirement of the law (x. 4). The righteousness of God and the law of God

are almost identical, and might be interchanged: the one is His character, the other is the expression of it. Such, unquestionably, is the ordinary meaning of the words sinful and righteous. They define relations between law and personal character. They describe states of moral character that correspond and do not correspond with the import or requirement of the law. But, say theologians, in the New Testament these words are employed in two different senses; and a man may be spoken of as righteous in the ordinary sense, or as imputedly righteous, he may be spoken of as sinful in the ordinary sense, or as imputedly sinful. How do we know that in the New Testament the words righteous and sinful are employed in two different senses? What is the precise meaning of imputedly righteous and imputedly sinful? the precise nature of imputed righteousness and imputed sin? By what mark shall we distinguish these latter senses when we meet them in the New Testament?

It appears to be held by many that the existence of such a thing as imputed righteousness is directly involved in what theologians are pleased to call the *forensic* meaning of the word justify (*δικαιώω*). In fact, the advocates of imputation usually take it for granted that they have sufficiently established their whole case, when they have proved that in the New Testament the word *justify* bears a judicial or forensic sense. I have no intention of troubling the reader with any lengthened or elaborate discussion of the meaning of the Greek word for *justify*—(1) because the subject has been so often, so fully, and, on the whole, so satisfactorily discussed already; and (2) because I have the happiness to concur entirely with my opponents on the main point at issue. Suffice it to say that the word *δικαιώω* is susceptible of, and is actually used, in two distinct fundamental senses: etymologically it means *to make one righteous who is not righteous*; more frequently it means *to adjudge, or acknowledge, or declare one righteous who is righteous*. No doubt, where the judge is deficient either in knowledge or integrity, persons may be pronounced righteous who are *not* actually righteous. Examples of this are not infrequent in the Old Testament. But even in these cases the ostensible and professed, if not the



real ground on which the sentence of justification is pronounced is the possession of actual righteousness; so that, after all, the word *δικαίω* invariably means to adjudge or declare one righteous *on the ground that he is righteous*. That this latter, which is what is usually denominated the forensic sense, is invariable in the New Testament, and all but invariable in the Greek version of the Old, has been demonstrated over and over again, and there is no room for a shadow of doubt in the matter. Thus far we are entirely at one with the theologians. Their premises are admitted at once, and without qualification. But what of the conclusion which they proceed to draw?

Curious it is to observe what wonders a single school term will sometimes work! It is really impossible to discover any connection whatever between the fact that justification is forensic, and the fact that it is by imputation. The word *δικαίω* is used in the forensic sense in the Old Testament as well as in the New; but surely no one will pretend that every—or, indeed, any—instance of justification recorded in the Old Testament is based on imputed righteousness. All the decisions in our courts of law are forensic; but who ever heard of a criminal being justified by imputation? The whole body of the redeemed will be pronounced righteous in the day of judgment, and *that* will be a forensic act; but does it follow that it will have anything to do with imputation? For all that I can see, imputation may be the wildest fancy imaginable, and justification will remain as forensic as it was before. The forensic meaning of the word *δικαίω*, so far from implying the existence of imputation, would rather seem to exclude its existence; for if justification mean to declare one righteous *who is righteous*, and if the word righteous be taken as it ought to be taken in its ordinary sense, then there is no room left for imputation.

Still, we are told that, in Scripture usage, the words righteous and sinful bear two different senses. No one, it is true, has made any systematic attempt to discriminate the two senses throughout the New Testament. Such a thing, if attempted, would very soon be found to be impracticable. And yet, if we are to believe theologians, the two meanings are not only

quite distinct, they are in a manner opposed to each other. The presence of the one is compatible with the presence of the other's opposite. A man may be at once imputedly righteous and ordinarily sinful, he may be at once imputedly sinful and ordinarily righteous. The context may be supposed to decide between the two; and we do sometimes meet in commentators with the remark that the word righteous in such a place is not used in its *dogmatic* sense; but this sort of thing is rare, and in the case of the word sin, to which the distinction must equally apply, it is almost entirely wanting. With the latter word, when it is absolutely necessary to draw a distinction in order to escape the usual meaning, a different expedient is mostly preferred. Either the word sin is transformed, in defiance of its plain meaning, as shown by the connection, into *sin-offering* (2 Cor. v. 21), or *penalty of sin* (1 Pet. ii. 24, &c.); or else the charge of ambiguity and double sense is thrown upon some neighbouring word, such as *make*, which is held to mean *reckon to* (2 Cor. v. 21), or *constitute*, which is likewise held to mean *reckon to* (Rom. v. 19). We shall be under the painful necessity of having to expose the hollowness of these and other equally worthless evasions at a later stage. In the meantime we must simply dismiss them and ask once more what is the precise nature of imputed righteousness and imputed sin, and how may we discriminate in the New Testament between the words expressing these notions, and the words expressing righteousness and sin in the ordinary sense? Does the word *justify* in the New Testament always mean *pronounce imputedly righteous*, or only sometimes? How shall we know when the word *sin* means *sin imputedly*—that is, *be reckoned to sin*—and when it means simply *sin*? And the word *condemn*—who shall tell us when it bears the sense *pronounce imputedly sinful*, and when the sense *pronounce sinful* simply? It is evident that the language of the New Testament can afford us no assistance in answering these questions. There we find simply *δικαιόω, κατακρίνω, δίκαιος, ἀμαρτωλός, δικαιοσύνη, ἀμαρτία, ἀμαρτάνω, &c.*, without any distinguishing mark to apprise us that these words are being used in a sense very much the reverse of the ordinary one. For example,

when we come to the word ἡμαρτον in Romans v. 12, how can we be sure that it means—not sinned, but—*were reckoned to have sinned*, or *had sin reckoned to them*? When we meet the words ἀμαρτία and δικαιοσύνη in 2 Cor. v. 21, how shall we divine that the quality of being *reckoned sinful* and the quality of being *reckoned righteous* are intended? When we read in 1 Cor. vi. 11, “But ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God,” what warrant have we to infer that the last-named process of justification precedes the first-named process of washing, regeneration, or sanctification through the power of the Divine Spirit (*cf.* Titus iii. 5), and that the word ἐδικαιώθητε means *were pronounced imputedly righteous*, and not *were pronounced righteous*? Or, again, when we read in Rom. viii. 3 that God “condemned the sin in the flesh” of Christ, how can we tell that the word κατακρίνω means *pronounce imputedly sinful* and punish accordingly, and not rather *pronounce sinful* and punish accordingly? Above all, when we find the words δίκαιος and ἀμαρτωλός in Rom. v. 19, on what principle shall we conclude that they bear the senses *reckoned-righteous* and *reckoned-sinful*, while the same words δίκαιος and ἀμαρτωλός in vv. 7 and 8 of the same chapter bear different, almost opposite, significations?

I confess I shrink from the attempt to define in precise terms the “orthodox” notions of imputed sin and imputed righteousness, and that not merely because the notions themselves are inconceivable, absurd, contradictory, but because there exists in different theological writers, and even occasionally in the same writer, a degree of vacillation and confusion that will render it a difficult task to state the orthodox position in any one form without appearing to do it injustice by excluding some other form in support of which eminent names might easily be quoted. The difficulties attending the theory of imputation are so serious as to have forced its advocates out of one mode of stating it into another, and then out of that other back to the old statement again, the position taken up in defending one point, or in repelling one form of attack, being frequently abandoned, though unconsciously, in order to make good the defence of another. A common way of putting it is

that the word righteous describes "the state of the believing man called forth by the Divine acquittal," so that the possession of imputed righteousness by the believer would appear to be an effect of the Divine sentence of justification, and to come after it. On this view, the word righteous (*δίκαιος*) is equivalent to justified (*δεδικαιωμένος*), and though the same form of expression is seldom applied to the word sinful (*ἁμαρτωλός*), that word must in like manner be equivalent to condemned (*κατακεκριμένος*). On the other hand, the old Protestant statement is that the act of justification follows instead of preceding the possession of imputed righteousness, that a man is justified on the ground that righteousness has been imputed to him; as in like manner that the act of condemnation follows instead of preceding the possession of imputed sin, that a man is condemned on the ground that sin has been imputed to him. On this view, a man is righteous before he is justified, he is justified on the ground that he is already righteous; as in like manner a man is sinful before he is condemned, he is condemned on the ground that he is already sinful.

Whichever of these views be preferred as the more correct, it is evident that they are quite distinct from each other, and that, according as we adopt one or the other, we shall require to attach different meanings to the words *justify* and *condemn*. In ordinary usage, as we have seen, the word *justify* means either to make one righteous who is not righteous, or to acknowledge one to be righteous who is righteous. This, theologians themselves allow; and they strenuously contend that in the New Testament the latter is the only admissible sense; and yet they appear at times to slide unconsciously into the other meaning. For the two meanings are just as applicable with imputed righteousness as with righteousness in the ordinary sense. To declare a man imputedly righteous who is imputedly righteous, is one thing; to make a man imputedly righteous who is not imputedly righteous, is another and a distinct thing. In the one case, the word *justify* will bear its ordinary New Testament signification, being preceded by a separate process of imputing righteousness from one person to another; in the other case, the word *justify* will somehow include within itself the process of imputing righteous-



ness from one person to another, expressing that process, as well as the process of justification understood in the sense last mentioned. So with the word *condemn*—it must include, in addition to its ordinary meaning, the process of imputing sin from one person to another. The latter of the two meanings must be regarded as a curious conglomeration of distinct ideas, particularly when it is remembered that the thing said to be imputed for righteousness is the life-long obedience and sufferings of Christ, while the thing said to be imputed for sin is the aggregate of the sins of all the elect. If the words *justify* and *condemn*, when applied to believers and Christ respectively, bear a meaning so much richer than their ordinary one, there ought surely to be some very notable sign to indicate the fact. It is necessary, at all events, to decide which of the above two meanings is the more “orthodox.”

Usually, when the question is asked, what constitutes a man imputedly righteous? the answer is, the fact that he is free from the penalty of the law, or, in other words, that he has been acquitted. When we ask upon what ground he was acquitted, the reply is, because he was imputedly righteous. In like manner, when the question is put, what constitutes a man imputedly sinful? the answer is, the fact that he lies under penalty of the law, or, in other words, that he has been condemned. When we ask upon what ground he was condemned, the reply is, because he was imputedly sinful. We must endeavour to evade this circle by putting on the words *justify* and *condemn* one, and only one, “orthodox” meaning. And there is little doubt what that meaning must be. The words must be taken in their ordinary New Testament significations. It is manifestly quite extravagant to pretend that the word *δικαίω* includes in its meaning the notion of imputing righteousness, or rather obedience and sufferings, from one person to another, and that the word *κατακρίνω* includes in its meaning the notion of imputing sin—an almost infinite amount of sin—from an indefinite number of persons to one. The old Protestant view must, therefore, be accepted without modification, and imputation must be regarded as a process antecedent to, and distinct from, justification and condemnation. To justify must mean to pronounce

a man imputedly righteous who is imputedly righteous; to condemn must mean to pronounce a man imputedly sinful who is imputedly sinful.

We spoke, in a previous chapter, of the thing transferred in a case of imputation as the *debitum*—in one instance the reward, in the other the penalty—and we did so in accordance with the manner of speech adopted by theological writers. But it is now evident that this is not enough for the theological doctrine of imputation. The thing transferred must be something more than merely the reward and the penalty, because it is spoken of in the New Testament as righteousness (*δικαιοσύνη*) and sin (*ἁμαρτία*), and the persons to whom imputation has been made are spoken of as righteous (*δίκαιος*) and sinful (*ἁμαρτωλός*) respectively. What is this something which the act of imputation confers, and on the ground of which justification or condemnation is pronounced? From all that I can gather, theologians conceive the righteousness of Christ very much as a garment, which is wrapped around the believing sinner the moment he exercises faith. Arrayed in this garment, he appears in court, where the judge, seeing only the outward garb of the culprit, pronounces sentence of acquittal. When this has been done, the demands of the law are held to have been satisfied. No second trial is conceived of as possible. The prisoner is set at liberty. Having passed successfully through the above not very searching ordeal, he is henceforth regarded, and spoken of, and treated as righteous, not so much because he is still arrayed in the garment which stood him in so good stead in presence of the judge, as because he is now out of court, he has been acquitted, and the law can no more bring a claim against him. Such is a plain, unvarnished statement of the prevailing idea of imputed righteousness. It vacillates between the idea of the obedience and sufferings of Christ, conceived of as a robe adhering to the sinner, and the bare idea of acquittal, based upon this legal device. There is, I hope, no great breach of charity in saying that the whole affair appears a trifle ridiculous. It is not clear how the obedience and sufferings of Christ could cling to a sinner at all, much less is it clear how they could cling to an indefinite number of sinners at the

same time. The whole frame-work of a court, a formal trial, and an acquittal, releasing men from the claims of the law, is a baseless figment of the imagination. It appears to originate partly through pressing the earthly analogy too far, and partly through misapprehending its true nature. No doubt, the man who has passed through the ordeal of an earthly trial successfully acquires a certain stamp, which we may call judicial righteousness, though it is certainly not the decision of the judge that confers the righteousness. The judge does nothing more than interpret and express the evidence. He merely recognises or homologates what the evidence has proved the man to possess. Moreover, the man is liable to be again put on trial, should further evidence be forthcoming. The judge's decision has really conferred nothing. It was the evidence that constituted the prisoner righteous, and further evidence will again constitute him sinful, when the decision will have to be reversed. It is the evidence in an earthly court that really confers on an accused person his relation to the law, whether of acquittal or condemnation. Now, in the case of "Him with whom we have to do," instead of evidence, we may substitute real character; *that* will constitute a man's relation to the law; for it will be known infallibly, and no formal trial will be needed. Courts, and witnesses, and evidence, are marks of earthly imperfection; even the judges upon earth are liable to err through ignorance, or partiality, or dishonesty; but, in the Divine light of the better world, character is not only the basis upon which sentence is pronounced—it literally pronounces sentence on itself. If there be such a thing as a formal assize, at which justification and condemnation shall be meted out, that will take place in the day of *judgment*, when, as we know, men shall be rewarded and punished, not on the basis of imputed righteousness and imputed sin, but "according to their works," according to what they are and have done (Matt. xxv. 31-46; Rom. ii. 2-16).

What has now been said completely dissipates the notion that righteousness—even imputed righteousness—consists in mere acquittal, and also the further notion that God, in the act of justifying, confers on the believer a new relation to the

law, by communicating to him a new objective character (*sit venia*) through which such a new relation to the law is constituted. The latter notion sets the meaning of the word *justify* at utter defiance, theologians themselves being judges. And when these two notions have been set aside as untenable, it is at once seen that the whole fabric of imputed righteousness and imputed sin is left hanging in the air. The language of the New Testament contains nothing, absolutely nothing, corresponding to either of the two ideas. We read, no doubt, that men are justified by faith (Rom. v. 1); but then it is because they attain to *righteousness* (δικαιοσύνη) by faith, not to imputed righteousness (i. 17). We are told that by the obedience of the one the many shall be made righteous (v. 19); but it is *righteous* (δικάιοι) they shall be made, not imputedly righteous: that death passed unto all men for that all sinned (v. 12)—*sinned* (ἥμαρτον), however, not were reckoned to have sinned. It is said, also, that God, having made Christ to be sin for us, by sending Him in the likeness of flesh of sin, condemned the sin in the flesh that had been assumed (2 Cor. v. 21; Rom. viii. 3); yet it was *sin* (ἁμαρτία) that Christ was made, and it was *the sin* (τὴν ἁμαρτίαν) that God condemned in His flesh,—in neither case was it imputed sin. The process of imputation, if any such exist, must precede justification, and be distinct from it; but in the New Testament nothing is spoken of as preceding justification, if we except faith and works springing from faith. Imputation must be an act performed by a person external to the believer, and must possess a character all its own; but no such act is ever alluded to in any part of the New Testament writings. In the language of the New Testament, and of theologians as well, it is faith that appropriates justifying righteousness, and puts it in possession of the believer; but faith, being a subjective change within the believer himself, cannot perform the act of imputation. It is a fair inference, too, that since faith is a subjective change, any effects which it produces on the character of the believer must be subjective also. The idea that God, taking into account the faith of the believer, reckons the righteousness, or rather the obedience and sufferings, of Christ to him, and then, on the ground that he is imputedly righteous,



justifies him—this idea is read into the New Testament, not extracted out of it. In the case of the imputation of sin, where there is no such thing as faith, the boldest advocate of received opinions must surely admit that there is not a vestige of evidence to support the doctrine; it is literally and entirely *read between the lines*.

There is, however, one further consideration which is supposed to make strongly in favour of justification by imputed righteousness, and of which it is needful to take some notice: the fact that in the New Testament justification is often spoken of as a thing already completed and past from the moment a man first believes. “Therefore, *having been justified* (δικαιωθέντες) by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. v. 1). “Much more, then, *having now been justified* (δικαιωθέντες νῦν) in His blood, shall we be saved from the wrath through Him” (v. 9). “He that did die *has been justified* (δεδικαίωται) from sin” (vi. 7). “Such were some of you, but . . . ye *were justified* (ἐδικαιώθητε), in the name of the Lord Jesus, and in the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor. vi. 11). From these and similar, though less absolutely unequivocal passages, it is inferred that justification must be an *act* done once for all in the first moment of faith, and not in any sort a life-long process: but it is certain that believers are renewed, sanctified, and made perfectly righteous only in a life-long process: and hence it appears to follow inevitably that justification must be based on something else than the righteousness of which the believer comes into complete possession only at death: from which it is regarded as a modest step to the conclusion that justification is based on the obedience and sufferings of Christ imputed to the believer, and received by faith alone. It must be observed, however, that if this argument prove anything, it will prove a deal too much. If the mere fact that justification is sometimes spoken of as if it were completed in the first moment of faith prove that justification is an act and not a life-long process, then the fact that sanctification is sometimes spoken of as if it were completed in the first moment of faith must prove that sanctification is an act and not a life-long process. Sanctification is represented and spoken of in the New Testament as com-

pleted from the first moment of faith quite as often as justification is so, as appears from the following, which are among the most unambiguous testimonies :—" Paul, unto the Church of God which is at Corinth, even them that *have been sanctified* (ἡγιασμένοις) in Christ Jesus, called so as to be saints (ἁγίοις)" (1 Cor. i. 2). "And such were some of you, but ye were washed, but ye *were sanctified* (ἡγιασθητε) . . . in the name of the Lord Jesus, and in the Spirit of our God" (vi. 11). "And hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith He *was sanctified* (ἡγιασθη) an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace" (Heb. x. 29). It is evident from such statements as the above that sanctification can readily enough—just as readily as justification—be spoken of as a thing completed and past in the experience of every believer. And the same is true of the various other forms of speech by which substantially the same process is designated, such as repentance + remission of sins; death to sin + resurrection to righteousness; putting off the old man or self + putting on the new man or Christ; crucifying, mortifying, or bringing to nought the flesh + receiving, or being quickened by the Spirit; washing, purification, redemption, renewal, regeneration, calling, adoption, creation after the image of Christ or of God, translation out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son, &c. It is true, in particular, of the most general and comprehensive of all the names for the process of which the technical theological designation is sanctification—viz., salvation. That process, as the modes of describing it sufficiently indicate, has two sides, a negative and a positive, which may be thought of and spoken of as distinct from each other. When the entire process is comprehended under a single name, the name, as will be readily perceived, is sometimes properly and peculiarly applicable to only one of the sides. Of this last class is washing or baptism. The rite of baptism symbolises "the putting off of the body of the flesh" through death with Christ to sin, that is, the process by which the principle of sin, with all its effects, is remitted, destroyed, or done away; but as this negative process is accompanied at every step by the positive process of regeneration, baptism is often used to designate both alike, and we read of "the wash-

ing of regeneration" (Tit. iii. 5), of men being "born of water" (John iii. 5), &c.

To quote all the passages where the above processes, or rather the one process under the above names, is spoken of as completed in the first moment of faith, would be a serious undertaking. I shall refer to a very few. "In whom also ye *were circumcised* (περιετμήθητε) with a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ; *having been buried* (συνταφέντες) with Him in baptism, wherein also ye *were raised* (συνηγέρθητε) with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead through your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, you, I say, *did He quicken* (συνεζωοποίησεν) together with Him, *having forgiven* (χαρισάμενος) us all our trespasses" (Col. ii. 11-13). The concluding clause shows that the forgiveness of *all* the believer's trespasses is thought of as taking place in the first moment of faith, and there is no doubt that by the forgiveness of trespasses is meant the cancelling of penalties, or the remission of what theologians call guilt; but then the preceding clauses show with equal clearness that the entire putting off of the body of the flesh, and consequently the entire removal or destruction of the principle of sin, is thought of as taking place in the same moment. From the apostle's point of view, the believer's past sins, so far as they existed at all in the moment of forgiveness, existed only in the form of guilt, whilst future sin on the part of the regenerated, renewed, absolutely Christ-like believer, is of course impossible. The view of the Reformed creeds that "justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein He pardoneth *all* our sins," but that sanctification whereby the principle of sin is done away is a life-long process, is in itself a plain contradiction, and is besides in the most obvious and direct antagonism to every sentence of the New Testament, which teaches, as every child capable of repeating the Lord's Prayer knows, that forgiveness of sins is required by every believer daily onward to the point of death (1 John i. 9). Again: "But when the kindness of God our Saviour, and His love toward man appeared, not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according

to His mercy He *saved* (ἔσωσεν) us through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, in order that having [on the ground of regeneration, &c.] been justified we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Tit. iii. 4-7). "Knowing this that our old man *was crucified* (συνεσταυρώθη) with [His old man], in order that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin; for he that *did die* (ἀποθανών) has been justified from sin" (Rom. vi. 6, 7). "Lie not one to another, since ye *did put off* (ἀπεκδυσάμενοι) the old man with his doings, and *did put on* (ἐνδυσάμενοι) the new man, which is renewed unto knowledge after the image of Him that created Him" (Col. iii. 9, 10). "Knowing that ye *were redeemed* (ἐλυτρώθητε) not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. i. 18, 19). "Suffer hardship with the Gospel, according to the power of God, that *saved* (σώσωντος) us, and *called* (καλέσωντος) us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace" (2 Tim. i. 8, 9). "And such were some of you, but ye *were washed* (ἀπελούσασθε), but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and in the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. vi. 11). "For whom He did foreknow He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; and whom He did predestinate them He also *called* (ἐκάλεσε), and whom He called them He also justified, and whom He justified them He also *glorified* (ἐδόξασεν)" (Rom. viii. 29, 30). "Giving thanks to the Father; who *made us meet* (ἱκανώσαντι) to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; who *delivered* (ἐρρύσατο) us out of the power of darkness, and *translated* (μετέστησεν) us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have our redemption, the remission of our sins" (Col. i. 12-14).

Let these passages suffice as examples of a mode of speech which pervades the whole New Testament. Many of them show



unmistakably, not only that the redemptive process may be spoken of as if it were completed in the first moment of faith, but also that justification follows and is based upon sanctification (1 Cor. vi. 11), death to sin (Rom. vi. 7), regeneration or renewal (Tit. iii. 4-7), redemption or remission of sins (Col. i. 12-14), calling (Rom. viii. 30 ; *cf.* 2 Tim. i. 8, 9 ; Tit. iii. 4-7 ; 1 Cor. i. 2) or whatever other name we may choose to apply to the moral transformation which theologians speak of as sanctification. I know of but one passage in the New Testament that has the faintest appearance of making justification precede sanctification, and that passage has *only* the appearance of doing so. "But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who was made unto us wisdom from God, and righteousness, and holiness, and redemption" (1 Cor. i. 30). That the four words wisdom (*σοφία*), righteousness (*δικαιοσύνη*), holiness (*ἁγιασμός*), and redemption (*ἀπολύτρωσις*) do not describe successive stages in the process of individual salvation, will be admitted by every one. The first three do not describe processes at all, but phases or states of character, belonging to the man who is "in Christ Jesus." The second and third are as nearly as possible identical in meaning, as Rom. vi. 19 clearly proves, where "iniquity unto iniquity" is strictly parallel to "righteousness unto sanctity" or "holiness:" this, in fact, is the invariable sense of the word *ἁγιασμός* in the New Testament. The last alone describes a process, and that process, as the texts already quoted have distinctly shown, is identical with the remission of sins (Eph. i. 7, 8 ; Col. i. 12-14), which in truth precedes—in the opinion of theologians forms part of—justification ; in truth is identical with—in the opinion of theologians precedes—sanctification ; in neither case is it even alleged that it succeeds or follows the attainment of righteousness or holiness. There is thus nothing whatever in the nature of succession, either of states or processes, in the verse quoted above ; and there would, if possible, be still less, were we to assume with theologians that the word *redemption* means the payment by Christ to the devil, or the Divine justice, of a price adequate to ransom the whole body of the elect from eternal perdition. Fortunately or unfortunately this last idea has very little foundation in fact—how much we shall see later on. The

word redemption invariably describes the process of deliverance *from sin itself*, being represented as identical with the process of sanctification or purification (Tit. ii. 14), of putting off the body of the flesh (Rom. viii. 23 ; Eph. i. 14 ; iv. 30 ; 1 Pet. i. 18 ; *cf.* iv. 1, 2), of remission of sins (Eph. i. 7 ; Col. i. 14)—a process which is figuratively ascribed to the application of the blood of Christ, and which is literally accomplished through death to sin with (= after the example of) Christ.

But, it will be said, if sanctification is frequently spoken of as a thing completed and past, it is also sometimes spoken of as a thing whose completion is still in the future. This is perfectly true. But it is true of justification not less than of sanctification. And it is true of salvation as a whole not less than of each of its parts or aspects. “And I say unto you that every idle word that men shall speak they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment ; for by thy words thou *shalt be justified* (*δικαιωθήσῃ*, *scil.* in the day of judgment), and by thy words thou shalt be condemned” (Matt. xii. 36, 37). “For not the hearers of the law are righteous before God, but the doers of the law *shall be justified* (*δικαιωθήσονται*) . . . in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my Gospel” (Rom. ii. 13, 16). “Yea, verily, and I count all things to be loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may gain Christ, and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith ; that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, becoming conformed unto His death [as the antecedent condition of resurrection, righteousness, and justification (Rom. vi. 6-8 ; Eph. iv. 22-24, &c.)] ; if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection of the dead. *Not that I have already obtained* [the prize due to righteousness (2 Tim. iv. 8)], or have already been perfected ; but *I follow after* [righteousness (Rom. ix. 30, 31 ; 1 Tim. vi. 11 ; 2 Tim. ii. 22)], if so be that I may apprehend that for which also I was apprehended

by Christ Jesus" (Phil. iii. 8-12).<sup>\*</sup> "But if, while we *are seeking to be justified* (*ζητοῦντες δικαιωθῆναι*), we ourselves also have been found sinners, is Christ a minister of sin? God forbid. For if I build up again those things which I destroyed [*scil.* the flesh with its necessary antagonism to the law of God], I prove myself a *transgressor* [and therefore, so far, *not* "justified in Christ," but condemned out of or apart from Christ] (Gal. ii. 17, 18). "So speak ye, and so do, as men that *shall be judged* by the law of liberty . . . [since] ye see that by works a man *is justified*, and not only by faith" (James ii. 12, 24). If it be said that these are but a few passages where justification is stated expressly or by name to be a process reaching completion only at the day of judgment, the reply is obvious: it will not be possible to produce over half as many where sanctification is stated by name to be a process reaching completion only at death. I know of only the following three:—"Sanctify them in Thy truth; Thy word is truth. As Thou didst send Me into the world, even so sent I them into the world; and for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified in the truth" (John xvii. 17-19). "And now I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you the inheritance among all them that have been sanctified" (Acts xx. 32). "And the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. v. 23). On the other hand, if it be said that sanctification, under another name is quite frequently spoken of as a life-long process, this is to be admitted; but then, justification, under another name, is also quite frequently spoken of as a life-long process. Wherever we read of men attaining to *righteousness* by degrees, by continued faith, and prayer, and effort, there it is implied that justification is a life-long process (*e.g.* Heb. xi., &c.)

The truth is that there is no evidence at all to support the

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<sup>\*</sup> The clause *ἡ ἤδη δεδικαίωμαι*, inserted by DEFG before *ἡ ἤδη τετελείωμαι* in v. 12 must be considered spurious, though the meaning which it conveys is implied in the whole connection, as a comparison with Rom. vi. 7 distinctly proves.

popular distinction between justification and sanctification as act and work respectively. Both are equally act and equally work. Both may be viewed as completed in the first moment of faith, being in a sense complete. Both are really and properly life-long processes, completed at death and judgment respectively. Salvation as a whole, and every component part of it, is spoken of in the New Testament as a thing of the past already accomplished, as a thing of the present in process of accomplishment, and as a thing of the future still to accomplish. There must therefore be a sense in which not only justification, but every soteriological process, can be all of these things at the same time. What that sense is ought not to be difficult to discover.

No reader of the New Testament can fail to observe that the apostles, and Paul in particular, draw a sharp distinction between the renewed part of the believer which they call the spirit—the new or inward man—and the unrenewed part which they call the flesh—the old or outward man; to note that they think and speak of these two morally contrasted entities as if they were quite separate from one another; that they apply epithets and predicates to each by itself; and that they identify the believer's personality now with the one and now with the other. Men may cavil at the objective validity of the distinction if they please; but that the apostles draw such a distinction, and frame their language in accordance with it, is beyond all doubt. The sinful, selfish, earthly elements of the believer's constitution are all thought of as ranged upon one side, which is called the flesh—the old, or outward man; the holy, Christ-like, heavenly elements are all thought of as ranged on the other side, which is called the spirit—the new, or inward man. It is not in the least necessary for our present purpose to decide where the boundary line, physical or metaphysical, between these contrasted elements lies, or whether there be any strict line of demarcation between them. The distinction may be merely a form of thought, and not a form of things at all; its effect upon apostolic language will be precisely the same in the former case as it would be in the latter. In point of fact the distinction has moulded New Testament language to such an extent that it is scarcely



possible to understand a single chapter of the epistles, unless it is kept steadily in view. When the personality of the believer is identified with the spirit, or new creature, as it not unfrequently is, then he is spoken of as already saved, redeemed, sanctified, justified, adopted, glorified. When the personality of the believer is identified with the flesh, or old creature, as it also not unfrequently is, then he is spoken of as yet to be saved, redeemed, sanctified, justified, adopted, glorified. When the personality of the believer is identified with neither the flesh nor the spirit, but with both combined, as it very well can be, and often is, then he is spoken of as in course of being saved, redeemed, sanctified, justified, adopted, glorified. As regards the new man, the soteriological processes are already complete; as regards the old man, they are still entirely in the future; as regards the two combined, they are partly complete, partly incomplete—that is, they are going on towards completion. When, for example, the apostle says that God, “according to His mercy *saved us* through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Tit. iii. 5), it is plain that the persons referred to by “us” are thought of as already completely renewed, otherwise they could not be spoken of as completely “saved;” they are persons fully answering to the description, “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things are passed away; behold they are become new” (2 Cor. v. 17). When, on the other hand, the same apostle exhorts the Philippians, “*Work out your own salvation* with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you to will and to work for his good pleasure” (ii. 12, 13), or when he tells the Corinthians, “We are a sweet savour of Christ unto God in *them that are being saved* and in them that are perishing” (2 Cor. ii. 15), it is equally plain that the persons referred to by “your” and “them that are being saved” are persons partly renewed and partly unrenewed, since it is “through the renewing of the Holy Ghost” that men are first justified and then saved (Tit. iii. 4-6). Again, when he says, “For *by hope were we saved*; but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopeth for that which he seeth? But if we hope for that which we see not, then do we with patience wait for it” (Rom. viii. 24, 25); or when the author

of Hebrews announces that Christ "*shall appear a second time apart from sin to them that wait for him unto salvation*" (ix. 28) : the subject of the hoped-for salvation is in both cases the as yet unredeemed body (Rom. viii. 23), with which the believer's personality is for the time identified, and which Christ shall renew and glorify at His coming (Phil. iii. 21). So much for salvation in general. Exactly similar phenomena appear in connection with justification, adoption, sanctification, redemption, and, in short, all soteriological processes whatever. When Paul writes, "*He that did die has been justified from sin*" (Rom. vi. 7), it is clear that the "he" can apply only to the new man in the believer, for the old man is still alive—alive to sin, and of course alive also to the law, to be condemned and cursed by it; he could not therefore be spoken of as either dead or justified. Examples of the other two cases where justification is concerned will be found in the passages Phil. iii. 8-12 and Rom. ii. 13-16, already cited.

The reader will thus see that there is no reason whatever for postulating such a thing as imputed righteousness. Apart from its inherent absurdity, which has been so abundantly evinced above, the doctrine of imputation would not clear up a tenth part of the apparent difficulties involved in the soteriological tenses of the New Testament, while it would create real difficulties in abundance, infinitely greater than any which it seeks to remove. The way in which theologians are in the habit of getting over such difficulties as imputation fails to explain, is curious and characteristic. According to the Apostle Paul, "We ourselves also which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves, groan within ourselves, *waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body*" (Rom. viii. 23). According to the Westminster divines, "Adoption is *an act* of God's free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to *all* the privileges, of the sons of God," in the first moment of faith; while redemption is the payment by Christ of a ransom price to the Divine justice, in consideration of death eternal not being inflicted on the whole body of the elect. How can believers wait for their adoption if it was completed, and *all* its privileges conferred, the moment they first believed? and

for their redemption, if it was finished the moment that Christ died? And how comes it that here and elsewhere adoption and redemption are spoken of as if they were the same identical moral-physical transformation of character, which was accomplished, first on the person of Christ Himself, and now also on the persons of all believers, after the example of Christ, through the ineffable working of the Spirit of God (Rom. viii. 11; Phil. iii. 21)? How do commentators and theologians meet these difficulties? Simply by postulating new senses for the words *adoption* (ὑιοθεσία) and *redemption* (ἀπολύτρωσις) in the present passage! The word *redemption* occurs in but two texts of the Epistle to the Romans (iii. 24; viii. 23): were we to assume that it bears the same meaning in the former of these passages which it undeniably bears in the latter, this would completely upset the whole doctrine of imputed righteousness: *ergo*, we must assume that it bears an entirely different meaning! This is arbitrary and unwarrantable enough. Yet it is nothing more than a fair sample of the manner in which the doctrine of imputation is read into the New Testament, and of the methods by which alone it can be defended. And, in truth, such violent expedients, deeply as they are to be lamented, and strongly as they must be condemned, are not in the least to be wondered at in the circumstances. There is really no end to the tricks of legerdemain which even the ablest and most candid men may play themselves, if once they begin to tamper with the meanings of terms, and to postulate new and unheard-of senses for words whenever the ordinary sense fails to quadrate with a preconceived theory. All that is needed to bring anything out of anything, in the most literal sense, is, when certain words are placed before us, to coin a new meaning for them, expressly adapted to the doctrine we wish to establish. This is what theologians have done. They find imputation everywhere, when in reality it is nowhere, simply because they have contrived to write the word *imputed* before every word where they wish to find it. In this way, quite a number of the plainest, simplest, most common, most unambiguous terms in the New Testament have been completely perverted from their natural sense in order to meet the

requirements of theory. As soon as we fall back on the ordinary principles of lexicography, foreign accretions have to be removed, and fancy meanings dismissed, and, when this has been done, the evidence in support of imputation is found to have evaporated entirely.

Is it necessary to add one further remark to obviate misrepresentation? While we maintain that justification is a life-long process, commencing in the first moment of faith, and reaching completion at the day of judgment, it surely does not follow that we *confound* justification with sanctification. Justification is an external, formal, judicial process, whereas sanctification is an internal, material, moral process. Justification is simply the formal recognition on the part of God that sanctification has taken place. So purely immaterial a matter is justification that the writer to the Hebrews has propounded an entire system of soteriology without using the word, and with nothing beyond the barest allusions to the thing, in the shape of occasional references, on the one hand, to the witness borne by God to the righteousness of Old Testament saints, and on the other hand, to the prospect of a final judgment. How inexplicable must this appear, were justification, on the ground of imputed righteousness, the essential preliminary and basis of sanctification! How easy is it to account for, if sanctification be the only material part of salvation, and justification merely the formal acknowledgment that sanctification has been accomplished! What is justification? The answer of the Westminster Catechism is in the following terms:—"Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein He pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in His sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone." This has been lauded beyond measure as a model of exact, comprehensive, and careful definition. In my humble opinion, there is only one clause in it that has anything whatever to do with the New Testament doctrine of justification—that, namely, which speaks of God accepting us as righteous in His sight; and even this is not perfectly exact, for acceptance is rather an effect of justification than justification itself. I should therefore prefer if the definition ran:—"In justification, God



acknowledges us to be righteous in His sight, which we are by faith in Christ." The last clause is added by way of explanation, and may be taken as a brief definition of sanctification. More fully, we might say that, "In repentance, regeneration, redemption, or sanctification, we are created anew after the image of God, and so made perfectly righteous, through the power of the Spirit of God, received by faith in Jesus Christ." Will any one dare to allege that the two processes covered by these definitions are not distinct from each other? Intimately allied and mutually dependent they certainly are—what parts of the work of salvation are not intimately allied and mutually dependent?—but to represent them as being either confused or identified with one another is a vulgar misrepresentation.

## CHAPTER IV.

## RUIN AND RESTORATION—A PARALLEL AND A CONTRAST.

IN last chapter but one reference was made to the necessity of collecting the doctrinal system of the Apostle Paul from passages where he expresses himself in language of his own, and of interpreting his Old Testament or *quasi*-Old Testament language in the light of the system thus ascertained. This is the task which we must now endeavour more fully to accomplish. And in doing so, it will be convenient to start from the very comprehensive summary contained in Rom. v. 12-21, which may be justly said to form the kernel of that whole epistle, since it gathers up and resumes all that is previously said from chap. i. 16 onwards, while it presents in succinct outline all that is subsequently said down to the close of chap. viii. However, before entering on the consideration of this much perplexed, and, to speak frankly, really perplexing passage, we may bestow a brief glance on the parallel passage, 1 Cor. xv. 20-22, which will afford us substantial assistance in elucidating the other.

In the Revised Version, the second of the two passages is translated as follows:—"But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the first fruits of them that are asleep. For since by man [came] death, by man [came] also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive."

In view of the parallel texts in Romans (v. 12, 18), the correct translation in v. 21 would no doubt be, "by *a* man," instead of "by man." It is not humanity in the abstract that is in question here any more than in Rom. v. 12-21, but single individuals, constituting the heads of races, whose

character and fate determines the character and fate of all their descendants, and who are therefore in each case the *first-fruits* (ἀπαρχή, v. 20) of an entire harvest. It was not humanity in the abstract that introduced resurrection of the dead, for, once fallen and dead, humanity of itself would have continued so; it was a single *Divine-human* individual through His righteousness (Rom. viii. 10). Were humanity in the abstract the cause of death, it could not possibly be the cause of resurrection also, since the two are incompatible. The Revisers' rendering, so far from conveying the apostle's meaning, puts into his mouth a statement which is almost as incredible as a flat contradiction. The conclusion does not follow from the premises, but rather an opposite conclusion. It is not reasoning, but the negation of reasoning. Expressed in the form of a syllogism, the argument would run thus :—

Whatever causes death causes resurrection.

Humanity causes death.

Therefore, humanity causes resurrection.

But here the premises, so far from being self-evident, are quite the reverse. On the contrary, the apostle's argument is :—

Resurrection is propagated as death is propagated.

Death is propagated through one individual to a whole race.

Therefore, resurrection is propagated through one individual to a whole race.

And the proper translation of the whole verse would be—  
 “For since by a man [cometh] death, by a man also [shall come] resurrection of the dead.” To which we may add the following verse : “For as in the [man] Adam all die, so also in the [man] Christ all shall be made alive.” The reasoning in the latter of these two verses demands that the verbs supplied in the former should be a present and a future. The placing of “also” in v. 21 between “[came]” and “the resurrection of the dead” (as in both the A.V. and the R.V.) is quite false and misleading, being entirely unwarranted by the Greek—just as much so as would be the placing of “also” in v. 22 at the very end of the verse. Neither in v. 22 can the Revisers be complimented on their success. They

inform the English reader that in the Greek the word Christ is preceded by a particle of definition, while they omit to inform him that the word Adam is preceded by the same particle, though the two particles are evidently meant to balance each other, and to point back to the indefinite "man" in the previous verse. The mention of the one without the other is not calculated to enlighten but to mislead.

So much for the translation. But what is meant by dying *in Adam*, and being made alive *in Christ*? In the first place, to die in Adam cannot possibly mean to have Adam's death reckoned to us, so that in Adam's death we are thought of and spoken of as having died; to be made alive in Christ cannot possibly mean to have Christ's resurrection reckoned to us, so that in Christ's resurrection we are thought of and spoken of as having risen. The tenses of the verbs, the meanings of the words, and the plain scope of the reasoning, equally and utterly exclude the idea that imputed death and imputed resurrection are referred to. In the second place, to die in Adam cannot mean that Adam and we are one in such a sense that his death is not only reckoned ours, but actually is ours—in other words, it cannot mean that Adam and we are one person, and our death one; to be made alive in Christ cannot mean that Christ and we are one in such a sense that his resurrection is not only reckoned ours, but actually is ours—in other words, it cannot mean that Christ and we are one person, and our resurrection one. In addition to other absurdities, this would imply that not only the death but the resurrection of all believers is already past, a notion which is refuted by the whole drift of the chapter, as well as by the tenses in the verse before us. In the third place, to die in Adam cannot mean that we are treated as if we had died Adam's death; to be made alive in Christ cannot mean that we are treated as if we had risen Christ's resurrection. The last idea is so extravagant that an apology is due for mentioning it. To say that it is alien alike to the grammar, to the lexicography, and to the connection of thought in the passage, is to convey but a faint conception of so utter a perversion of the apostle's language. Were it not that such fantastic tricks are freely indulged in dealing with other



passages, there would be little need to notice them here. In opposition to all these artificial and unwarranted interpretations, every consideration, lexical, grammatical, and contextual, demands that death and resurrection in Adam and in Christ respectively should be experiences which men themselves undergo in their own proper persons, and not experiences undergone for them in the person of a substitute. To die in Adam can, in accordance with the context and with experimental fact, have only one meaning—to die in a nature, or character, or constitution, derived from Adam, and identical with his, and to die through or in consequence of possessing that nature, or character, or constitution. In like manner, to be made alive in Christ must mean to be made alive in a nature, or character, or constitution, derived from Christ, and identical with His, and to be made alive through or in consequence of possessing that nature, or character, or constitution. The underlying principle is that nature or character determines fate or destiny. We *see* this principle exemplified in the case of all who are naturally or organically connected with Adam. We *shall see* it exemplified in the case of all who are naturally or organically connected with Christ. When the apostle says that “through a man cometh death,” and adds in explanation that “in Adam all die,” his meaning is that all men suffer death in virtue of the common nature which they derive from Adam. When he says that “through a man shall come resurrection of the dead,” and adds in explanation that “in Christ all shall be made alive,” his meaning is that all believers shall experience resurrection to life in virtue of the common nature which they derive from Christ. Adam in his nature and experience is a sample or first-fruits of all his descendants. Christ in his nature and experience is a sample or first-fruits of all His followers.

That the apostle’s meaning is what has now been stated—that Adam and Christ affect the destiny of all men and all believers respectively through the medium in each case of a common nature, possessed of special characteristics, entailing death in the one case, resurrection from the dead in the other—is plain from the statements that follow towards the end of the chapter. “The first man Adam,” says the apostle, dealing

somewhat freely with the narrative in Genesis, “became a living *soul*; the last Adam a life-giving *spirit*. Howbeit, that is not first which is *spiritual*, but that which is *soulish*; then that which is *spiritual*. The first man is of the earth, *earthy*; the second Man is of heaven [*heavenly*]. As is the *earthy*, such are they also that are *earthy*; and as is the *heavenly*, such are they also that are *heavenly*. And as we have borne the image of the *earthy*, we shall also bear the image of the *heavenly*. Now this I say, brethren, that *flesh and blood* [the *soulish* or *earthy*] cannot inherit the *kingdom of God* [the sphere of the *spiritual* or *heavenly*]; neither doth *corruption* [the characteristic of the *soulish* or *earthy*] inherit *incorruption* [the characteristic of the *spiritual* or *heavenly*]” (vv. 45-50). Again, note the opposing characteristics in the following :—“It is sown in *corruption*; it is raised in *incorruption*: it is sown in *dishonour*; it is raised in *glory*: it is sown in *weakness*; it is raised in *power*: it is sown a *soulish* body; it is raised a *spiritual* body. . . . This *corruptible* must put on *incorruption*, and this *mortal* must put on *immortality*. But when this *mortal* shall have put on *immortality*, then shall come to pass the saying that is written, *death* is swallowed up in *victory*. O Death, where is thy victory? O Death, where is thy sting? The sting of death is *sin*, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God that giveth us the victory [*righteousness* (Rom. vii. 24)] through [the grace of] our Lord Jesus Christ” (vv. 42-44; 53-57). With this may be compared: “But ye are not in the *flesh*, but in the *spirit*, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. Now, if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. And if Christ is in you, the *body* is *dead* because of *sin*; but the *spirit* is *life* because of *righteousness*. But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, He that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall make alive your mortal bodies also through His Spirit that dwelleth in you” (Rom. viii. 9-11; cf. also 2 Cor. iv. 16—v. 3).

Nothing can be more evident than that Adam and Christ are here represented as possessing opposite natures—natures having opposite characteristics, and entailing opposite destinies—which they transmit to all who derive or descend from

them. The nature of Adam is from the earth, and therefore earthy, soulish, fleshly, sinful, characterised by corruption, dishonour, weakness, mortality; the nature of Christ is from heaven, and therefore heavenly, spiritual, life-giving, righteous, characterised by incorruption, glory, power, immortality. In like manner, the natures of all who derive or descend from Adam are earthy, soulish, fleshly, sinful, characterised by corruption, dishonour, weakness, mortality; while the natures of all who derive or descend from Christ are heavenly, spiritual, life-giving, righteous, characterised by incorruption, glory, power, immortality. Hence to Adam and all who derive or descend from him, all who bear his image, all who are such as he was, death is a natural necessity; to Christ and all who derive or descend from Him, all who bear His image, all who are such as He was, resurrection to life is a natural necessity. There is thus an absolute correspondence between nature or character and fate or destiny. Flesh and blood does not inherit the kingdom of God, because in the nature of things it cannot, because the corruptible and the incorruptible are opposite and incompatible. It does not appear that Almighty God Himself could, even if He would, treat a man arbitrarily, or in a manner wholly out of harmony with his nature. Wherever there is flesh and blood, with its inherent sin, corruption, dishonour, weakness, there must be death; and, conversely, wherever there is death, there must be flesh and blood, with its inherent sin, corruption, dishonour, weakness. In like manner, wherever there is spirit—*i.e.*, spirit united to, and determined in its character by, the Divine—with its inherent righteousness, incorruption, glory, power, there must be life; and, conversely, wherever there is life, there must be spirit, with its inherent righteousness, incorruption, glory, power. The first of the two natures is out of harmony with the law, that is, it is sinful; the second is in harmony with the law, that is, it is righteous; and so, as a matter of course, the penalty of death attends the one, the reward of life the other. Subjection to sin, subjection to the law, and subjection to death, are as inseparably bound together as the qualities of matter, possibly more so; and so are freedom from sin, freedom from the law, and freedom from death.

As the apostle contemplates death and resurrection quite independently of one another, his chief concern being with the latter alone, he is naturally led to represent the two races of which he speaks in complete separation from one another. The head of the first race is from the earth, and only earthy, the descendants being exactly like their head ; the Head of the second race is from heaven, and only heavenly, the descendants being again exactly like their Head. In point of fact, however, the two races never exist in complete separation from one another so long as the heavenly race exists in the sphere of the earthy. *All* the members of the second race begin their course while members of the first as well. What constitutes a man a member of either race is that he be descended from the common head, possess the common nature, and exist in the common sphere ; and all the members of the second race (the Head not excluded) are descended from the head of the first, possess the nature common to the first, and exist in the sphere proper and peculiar to the first. It follows, of course, that every member of the second race must have been twice born, must unite two natures oppositely characterised in the totality of his constitution, must undergo experiences proper to each of these natures, and for this purpose must exist in two widely different spheres at the same time. The Second Adam was from heaven, heavenly ; but He was also and at the same time from the earth, earthy. He brought from heaven a nature heavenly, spiritual, life-giving, righteous, characterised by incorruption, glory, power, immortality ; but He also received from earth, through the first Adam, a nature earthy, soulish, fleshly, sinful, characterised by corruption, dishonour, weakness, mortality ; and as a matter of course He passed through the life-long processes of death and resurrection to life ; existing the while in the earthy sphere so far as He was earthy and dying ; in the heavenly sphere so far as He was heavenly and risen again. In like manner, every believer, having received from earth, through the first Adam, a nature earthy, soulish, fleshly, sinful, characterised by corruption, dishonour, weakness, mortality, receives from heaven, through the Second Adam, a nature heavenly, spiritual, life-giving, righteous, characterised by incorruption, glory, power,



immortality; and, as a matter of course, he passes through the life-long processes of death and resurrection to life; existing the while in the earthy sphere, so far as he is earthy and dying; in the heavenly sphere so far as he is heavenly and risen again. As nature or character determines experience or destiny, so *vice versâ* experience or destiny implies a corresponding nature or character. Christ and believers undeniably pass through experiences proper to both of the two contrasted natures; undeniably, therefore, Christ and believers must unite in their own persons both of the two contrasted natures (*cf.* Rom. vi. 1-11).

One point more remains to be noticed. It will be observed that in the present passage the apostle bases his view of the corrupt, perishing, mortal nature of the first man (together with his descendants) on the fact that he was of the earth, earthy, that he was made a living *soul* as distinguished from a life-giving *spirit*. According to the verses quoted above, Adam was subject to death by nature, and not in consequence of anything which he did, just as infants are subject to death by nature, and not in consequence of anything which they do. There is no notion of a *fall* through which sin and death entered the world. On the contrary, the words quoted from Gen. ii. 7, "And man became a living soul," were spoken of Adam before he fell; yet these words are adduced by the apostle to confirm his view of the corrupt, perishing, mortal nature of man *as he now exists*, of the first man *and all his descendants*. The sense put upon the passage of Genesis, like the reading adopted to help it out, is no doubt somewhat peculiar, as it is certainly unhistorical. Instead of *living* soul the apostle's line of argument would rather lead us to expect *dying* or *mortal* soul. Living is the attribute proper to the word spirit in the other member of the parallel (*cf.* "the spirit is life," Rom. viii. 11), not to the word soul as here interpreted by the apostle. The truth is that the apostle puts upon the word soul an altogether special sense, which it was never intended by the author of Genesis to convey, and which renders the accompanying epithet living wholly inappropriate, or at least out of place. The passage is quoted, not for the sake of the word living, but for the sake of the word soul, and

because, with the words which the apostle adds ( . . . first . . . Adam), it suggests as an antithesis Christ with His living or life-giving Spirit, the antithesis between soul and spirit as between man in the state of nature and man in the state of grace being already in the apostle's mind (ii. 14). Soul and spirit are evidently related to each other as the more familiar flesh and spirit (comp. ii. 14 with iii. 1 ; Jude 19), and since the epithet living cannot be got rid of in connection with the former, the contrast is maintained as far as possible by employing the stronger epithet life-giving in connection with the latter. As usual, the apostle's exegesis attaches itself merely to the words of the Old Testament writer, disregarding entirely their historical sense and connexion. Nor can it be regarded as at all strange or unprecedented that this merely verbal exegesis should lead up to a contradiction, not merely with the historical sense of the narrative in Genesis, but with the more familiar view of the apostle himself on the primitive condition of man. Contradictory results arising out of quotations adduced and interpreted for the purpose of driving a special point are common enough in the New Testament. We shall meet with plenty of them by-and-by. And there is no question but we have one here. The narrative in Genesis, which the Apostle Paul elsewhere accepts in its simplest and most natural sense (Rom. v. 12), represents the primitive condition of man as one of righteousness and incorruption or immortality. Sin and death entered the world together, after Adam had disobeyed the specific command of God not to eat the forbidden fruit. This implies that Adam, before he fell, existed in a state of perfect righteousness and perfect life, exempt from sin and mortality in any degree or in any form. The idea that Adam, previous to the fall, existed in some sort of intermediate state, neither mortal nor immortal, or rather, perhaps, both mortal and immortal, that the seeds of dissolution were part and parcel of his original constitution, and yet that he was destined to pass into a strictly immortal state without dissolution, that he was mortal in the sense that his physical constitution was a decaying, dying constitution, immortal in the sense that his physical constitution was destined to be transformed into an undecaying, undying constitution before it

should reach the point of utter decay and death—this idea is a pure fabrication of theologians, foreign alike to the Old and to the New Testament. Scripture recognises no intermediate state between mortality and immortality such as is here presupposed. To be mortal in the Scripture sense is not merely to be destined to die at some future time, but to be actually in process of dying at the present time. If the physical constitution of Adam was originally mortal, then Adam must have been in process of dying before he fell, and in that case it could not possibly be said that death entered the world through sin—at least it could not be so said unless Adam was originally sinful as well as mortal—in which case the narrative of the fall would have to be understood in a figurative sense. That Adam, had he remained unfallen, would have developed out of a mortal into an immortal state, either by degrees, or by an instantaneous transformation such as shall take place on the *fallen* survivors at the second coming, is an ecclesiastical invention, unsupported, or rather directly contradicted, by the plain teaching of Scripture. It is the fruit of an attempt to reconcile what are supposed to be the natural probabilities of the case and the findings of science with statements of Scripture which, if taken literally, are flatly opposed to them. Unless we agree to disregard Scripture entirely, we must adopt one or other of two alternatives: either (1) that the original constitution of Adam was identical with that of all his descendants, being in subjection to sin, corruption, and death, and that the narrative of the fall embodies this idea in a figuratively historical form; or (2) that the original constitution of Adam was entirely different from that of all his descendants, that it was righteous, incorruptible, and immortal, that Adam by his disobedience came for the first time into subjection to sin, corruption, and death, and that the narrative of the fall embodies this idea in a literally historical form.

It might perhaps be supposed that Paul accepts the former of these alternatives in its entirety, that he not only attributes to Adam an original constitution sinful, corrupt, mortal, identical in all respects with that of his descendants, but that in addition to this he understands the narrative of the fall in a

figurative sense. Such, however, can hardly be the case. For, first, there is no good reason to doubt that in Rom. v. 12, *seq.*, Paul understands the narrative of the fall in a literal sense; and, second, even in 1 Cor. xv. 45, *seq.*, Paul reasons on the exact words of a quotation from Gen. ii. 7 in a manner which shows how entirely foreign to his way of looking at Scripture would be the figurative interpretation of the narrative of the fall. We are therefore bound to suppose that the apostle by no means intended to exclude the literal interpretation of Gen. iii.; only he is led, in following out and applying what we know to have been the current interpretation of Gen. ii. 7, to put upon that passage an interpretation which does actually exclude the literal interpretation of Gen. iii. Were this phenomenon an isolated one, we might perhaps hesitate to trust our own faculties, and suppose that we were somehow misunderstanding the apostle; but, as I have said, there are other instances of an exactly similar character, so that there need be no hesitation in the matter.

Still, though the line of thinking and reasoning in 1 Cor. xv. 42, *seq.*, may have been helped out by the words of Gen. ii. 7, it would be too much to conclude that the view there presented of the primitive condition of man is due to mere misunderstanding of that passage, and has no independent foundation in the apostle's mind. The fact that the interpretation put upon Gen. ii. 7 is unhistorical leads to an opposite inference—viz., that the apostle is reading ideas into the passage of Genesis which rest upon independent grounds—ideas that owe their existence, as well as their validity, to other than Old Testament sources of evidence. In Rom. v. 12, *seq.*, the teaching of the apostle, so far as it touches the primitive condition of man, is evidently based on the Old Testament narrative, which is construed, naturally enough, as literal history; but it is not so clear that the same can be said of his teaching in the passage before us. At any rate there is room for one or two reflections as to the compatibility or incompatibility of belief in the literal historical view of the Old Testament narratives relating to the creation and fall of man with belief in the fundamental Christian doctrines of sin and salvation.



No one, I presume, will deny that the teaching of Paul in regard to the presence and working of sin in human nature, as well as in regard to the presence and working of the Spirit of Christ in believers, was largely determined by his own experience. The presence and working of sin on the one hand, and the presence and working of the Spirit of Christ on the other, were the two most certain, most elementary, most fundamental facts in the inner consciousness of Paul subsequent to his conversion. The man who could write in the terms which follow, whatever he might think on the *origin* of sin in human nature, must have known of its *existence* by direct experience. "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man; but I SEE a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then I myself with the mind serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin" (Rom. vii. 22-25). And when we consider that he who so wrote of himself "was alive apart from the law once" (v. 9), that "as touching the righteousness which is in the law [he was] found blameless" (Phil. iii. 6), how can we entertain a doubt that the *universality* of sin in human nature would appear to him as a self-evident truth? If the principle of sin was found to exist in all its power in him, notwithstanding his outward blamelessness, how could there be any one in whom it did not exist? This conclusion cannot be evaded by alleging that Paul's opinion of the universal sinfulness of human nature was based ultimately, not on his own experience, but on the Scripture account of the fall; for (1) it will be shown below that though Paul, in Rom. v. 12, *seq.*, accepts the traditional idea that sin and death entered the world for the first time through the fall of Adam, he by no means goes so far as to teach dogmatically, or even to adopt incidentally, the Church doctrine of original sin; and (2) the Scripture account of the fall must have been known to the apostle before his conversion, when he had no idea of the universal and incurable sinfulness of "the flesh," but on the contrary was still attempting to attain to righteous-

ness in his natural state. It was his own experience, then, of the presence and working of sin within him *after* his conversion that taught Paul how completely dominated by sin human nature is. And this is a proof that his doctrine of sin possesses all the validity of a fact given in experience, and is in no way dependent on the Old Testament doctrine of the fall. The same conclusion is still further confirmed by the discussion contained in the opening chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, where the apostle propounds his proper *dogmatic* view on the subject of human sin, as a preliminary to setting forth his Gospel or doctrine of salvation. For there, incontestably, the argument rests throughout on experience, and is quite independent of any theory as to the origin of sin, either in the created world in general, or in the human subject in particular. The apostle takes human nature simply as he finds it, and appeals direct to history and consciousness in proof of its universal sinfulness. His whole position would remain precisely what it is though the doctrine of an historical fall were exploded and given up. It is true that in the end the apostle invokes Scripture in support of his views (iii. 10-18); but the way in which this is done serves only to point to the same general result; for it is not the doctrine of the fall to which appeal is made—that is brought in only in chap. v. 12, *seq.*, for a directly practical purpose—but detached statements of “the law,” which are taken to describe the universal empirical condition of human nature, while the stage at which these are introduced, and the mode in which they are interpreted, render it quite manifest that the whole is directed to establishing a foregone conclusion. Particular instances of specially aggravated sin among Gentiles and Jews—particular Scripture quotations spoken originally in reference to special classes of persons—would never prove what the apostle requires. They merely illustrate a principle that is known to be true on independent, that is, on immediately experimental grounds. That principle is that human nature or human flesh, as it now exists—whatever it may have been originally—is tainted and vitiated by sin, that all men as they are born into the world possess a “body of sin,” a soulish, fleshly, corrupt nature, which is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be (Rom.

viii. 7), which lusteth against the new spiritual nature received by believers from Christ (Gal. v. 17), and which can be got rid of only by being "brought to nought" in death (Rom. vi. 6). The existence of this sinful, fleshly nature in all men is a fact of experience, whatever theories may be formed about it. The apostle knows that it is so, and knows further that it serves to explain the correlative fact of universal death. It is evident, too, that this fact of the present universal sinfulness of human nature is the main fact about each of us, as the apostles would have been the first to admit: any question as to how human nature came to be thus pervaded by sin is of very subordinate consequence, and possesses a speculative rather than a practical interest; so at least the apostles would have said. The question of the universal sinfulness of human nature occupies a *very prominent* place in the New Testament; the question of how human nature came to be thus universally sinful occupies a *very subordinate* place—hardly any place at all in fact; it is brought in merely for the sake of illustrating some other point, and its unimportance may be measured by the fact that in the writings of Paul there are actually two conflicting theories about it, whilst in the other great doctrinal writing of the New Testament—the Epistle to the Hebrews—there is no reference to it at all. Still, the question as to the origin of man, and the nature of his primitive constitution, is forced upon us by the prevailing direction of modern scientific inquiry, and we must needs be prepared to assume a definite position in regard to it.

Now, one or two things are tolerably clear. In the first place, it is clear that Paul in 1 Cor. xv. 45, *seq.*, traces the corruption, degradation, and death of the first man and all his descendants to the fact that they are "of the earth, earthy," and it is approximately certain that this view was suggested by his own experience of sin and death as inseparably connected with the flesh or physical part of his constitution. When he refers to Gen. ii. 7, he does so merely to read into it his favourite distinction between flesh and spirit, as between the natural, sinful, unrenewed, and the spiritual, righteous, renewed, and the validity of this distinction rests on his own experience of sin and redemption, not on anything

contained in the Old Testament. He appears to regard "flesh and blood" as corrupt simply because it is flesh and blood, because it is "of the earth, earthy," and not "of heaven, heavenly," or Divinely-spiritual. The same idea is perhaps countenanced by the author of Hebrews—who in general draws so sharp a distinction between the earthly and the heavenly—when, following the author of Psalm viii., he represents man as made by God what he is now (ii. 7, *seq.*), and "flesh and blood" as naturally subject to the devil and death (v. 14).

Again, it is clear, or will be made so presently, that when Paul traces the death of the first man and all his descendants to the original act of disobedience, he is merely using the current traditional view of the way in which men are ruined to illustrate and commend his own view of the way in which men are restored. That he refers to the fall of Adam at all is due simply to the fact that it supplies him with a foil to set in a clear and inviting aspect the scheme of salvation he is engaged in propounding. He is not delivering dogma on the subject of human sin. All that he has to say on that subject in itself has been already said in chaps. i.-iii. He is merely using materials derived from the Old Testament, or from current opinion regarding the Old Testament, for purposes of practical exhortation and illustration, and no one who knows anything about how the New Testament writers in general, and Paul in particular, quote and apply the Old Testament to enforce their own ideas, will for a moment imagine that his mere repetition of the narrative in Genesis relating to the fall confers upon it any additional authority, or fixes its proper interpretation. As well might one pretend that the meaning which he reads into the seventh verse of the previous chapter was originally contained in that verse, and that the author of these two chapters of Genesis offers two contradictory accounts of the origin of sin and death in human nature. The Old Testament account of the creation and fall of man must therefore stand or fall on its own merits.

Further, it is clear that the literal view of the Old Testament account of creation generally can no longer be maintained. Science demonstrated to us some time since that the earth has



existed very much as it now exists, peopled by vegetable and animal life, for a period that must be computed by myriads of years. And if the account of creation generally cannot be understood literally, it seems very precarious, not to say inconsistent, to stand on the literal character of the account of *man's* creation. The creation of man is simply a part of creation generally, and if the account of the whole must be taken in a figurative sense, with what show of reason can it be maintained that the account of the part is to be taken in a literal sense? And, again, if the account of the creation of man must be understood figuratively, it is surely very hazardous to assume that the account of the fall of man is literal history. One would think that the two must be either both literal or else both figurative. Besides, there are special difficulties involved in the idea of a literal fall, whereby sin and death were for the first time introduced into the world, difficulties so serious as to have led many theologians otherwise perfectly orthodox (too orthodox !) to deny altogether the natural immortality of man as originally created. The plain unsophisticated sense of Scripture is to the effect that by the original act of disobedience sin entered into the world, and along with it decay and death. That is to say, through the fall the human constitution was changed from an undecaying, undying constitution, into a decaying, dying constitution. But this would imply that the original constitution of man was so enormously different from the present as to be altogether inconceivable, not to say impossible, in a world such as, if we may trust the clearest findings of science, ours must have been for myriads of years. The mere fact that primitive man was destined to feed on the vegetable products of the earth appears, from a scientific point of view, to offer a flat contradiction to the idea that he possessed an undecaying, undying constitution, for the process of assimilation implies decay, and decay is the same identical process with death. Moreover, it is clearly indicated in different parts of Scripture that external nature, including presumably the lower animals, partakes in the present degradation of man, and is destined to partake in his ultimate glorification. The Apostle Paul in particular—whose views on the subject are evidently in the nature of a corollary to

the view which experience had led him to adopt in regard to "the flesh"—tells us that "the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God ; for the creation was subjected to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only so, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body" (Rom. viii. 19-23). These verses plainly teach that the whole created world, and man in so far as he belongs to it, is corrupt and enslaved, liable to pain, misery, and death, and requiring to be redeemed and glorified. They almost seem to imply, in accordance with 1 Cor. xv. 42, *seq.*, that the world was originally so constituted by God (v. 20), and that instead of man having corrupted and degraded the world, the world corrupted and degraded man. Whether this last point be so or not it is certain that physical science is altogether opposed to the notion that the fall of man, some six thousand years ago, produced any change whatever on the conditions of life as then existing in the world. It is, I apprehend, quite indisputable that pain, misery, and death, existed in the world—that the whole creation was groaning and travailing in pain together—myriads of years before the time of the supposed creation and fall of man. And if the lower animals, to whom, along with man, the vegetable world is said to have been given for food, have possessed the same organisation, and existed under the same conditions, for ages, how is it possible to believe that the nature of man, and the conditions of his existence, underwent a complete degradation some six thousand years ago—a degradation, too, in which the whole creation, animate and inanimate, is said to have shared ? A human being, existing in a world such as the present, absolutely sinless, perfectly blessed, and immortal, looks very like an impossibility. Weakness, suffering, and decay appear to be necessary elements in the present constitution of things. The energy of the universe is undergoing

constant dissipation, and the forms of life on the earth's surface sustained by the products of that energy cannot but share in the general dissipation. No wonder that theologians have come to regard the natural immortality of man as absurd, and his natural mortality as self-evident. But if man was naturally mortal, he must have been naturally sinful too—at least if there be truth in the apostle's statement that "the sting of death is sin." If man was always the same weak, frail, suffering, perishing creature that he is now—which is what is implied in saying he was mortal—how is it possible to pretend that death with all miseries is the immediate effect of sin, unless sin existed from the beginning? And wherein could the curse consist, if the fall produced no effect whatever either on the constitution of man or on that of the world around him? How comes it that the whole creation is now in "the bondage of corruption" and longing to share in "the liberty of the glory of the children of God," if that bondage was not produced by the fall? If it was produced by the fall, how can it be maintained that man was naturally mortal? If the supposition of a degradation in man's physical constitution be absurd, how can the degradation of the whole creation be otherwise than absurd? Conversely, if the whole creation was in the bondage of corruption and longing to be redeemed from the very beginning, on what principle can it be maintained that man's flesh or physical constitution was not in the bondage of corruption and longing to be redeemed from the very beginning?

On the other hand must be taken into account the results of historical criticism, which are scarcely less important than those of physical science. It appears to be quite clearly made out that we have at the opening of Genesis not one account of creation but two, and two accounts which originated quite independently of one another, and are, in various details, such, for example, as the order of creation, "mutually antagonistic and utterly irreconcilable." Of these two narratives, the second, which contains the account of the fall, is probably the older, but neither can be assigned to an earlier date than the ninth century B.C. Moreover, when we proceed down the course of the narratives, we come at once on a series of characters, said to be descendants of the first man, to which enormous, and, as

is now generally acknowledged, perfectly fabulous, ages are attributed. These characters cannot possibly be historical. They are regarded, apparently with the best of reason, as purely ideal figures, framed to bridge over the gaps of tradition prior to the dawn of strict history. A parallel series occurs later on, some of the names in which may be identified with those of places that existed at or before the time when the narratives took shape, whilst others of them appear to be abstractions pure and simple. The abstract or ideal nature of all these figures is inferred, not only from the incredible length of the ages ascribed to them, but from the evidently systematic character of the two series, whether as viewed each by itself or in their mutual relation to one another, as well as from the round numbers that go to compose their ages. But if the immediate descendants of the first man are purely ideal, and in no sense historical, how is it possible reasonably to hold that the first man himself is an historical character? If the critics be right, as I apprehend they must be allowed to be, in regarding Methuselah and his compeers as mere abstractions, called into being to account for a state of things that existed at the time the narratives were written, they must also be right when they maintain that the narratives relating to the creation and fall are ideal representations, framed to account for the world and the human race as they are found in experience. This at least may be said : that if we assume the correctness of the critical view, everything in the early narratives of Genesis is adequately and fully explained ; if we assume anything else, the difficulties, both scientific and historico-critical, are so enormous as to stagger all rational credibility.

On the whole, if the scientific and the critical difficulties be taken together, and allowed their due weight, it must appear to every unprejudiced mind that the evidence in support of an historical fall has reached painfully near the vanishing point. Theologians may still continue to tell us that when science and criticism have each said their last word, their results will be found in perfect harmony alike with one another and with the strict historical view of the Genesis accounts of the creation and fall; but the rational conclusion at which to arrive, looking



to the present state of the evidence, and to the history of past discussion upon it, is that, in the circumstances specified, the Genesis accounts of the creation and fall, considered as literal history, will be found to have no relation whatever to the perfected results of science and criticism. It is simply a statement of fact to say that the theologians, in their conflict with the geologists, have been beaten along the whole line. Their ingenious but forced and fanciful attempts to reconcile science and Genesis are now treated with universal contempt, and sensible people have already learned to turn a deaf ear to the new modifications of them that are constantly being proposed. The more we know about science, and the more we know about Genesis, the more hopelessly discrepant are the findings of the one from the plain statements of the other, and yet we are asked to believe that when our knowledge of science and Genesis has reached perfection the two will be found in perfect harmony!

At the same time, while I do not seek to disguise from the reader my own opinion as to where the balance of the evidence lies, I must point out that nothing in this work is built on the rejection of an historical fall. No doubt the denial of an historical origin to the human race involves the denial of the divine origin of sacrifice. But even that is not expressly assumed or built upon in the following pages. All the arguments here used will retain their full force, though the narratives with which the book of Genesis opens are throughout accepted as literal history. Nor is it in the least necessary to attach overmuch importance to the decisions of scientific men on the origin of our race, or to commit one's-self with undue haste to their present views; although, on the other hand, it is but fair to them to say that we know just so much as they can tell us on the subject, *and no more*. The Bible can tell us nothing as to either the time or the manner of the origin of the world in general, or of the human race in particular. The latter runs back into impenetrable obscurity, or at least into an obscurity which scientific men alone can be expected to penetrate. Their prevailing verdict at present is that man has developed by slow degrees out of lower forms of animal life. And this of course must be held to exclude any such thing as an historical

fall. Man, on supposition that this view of his origin is correct, must be fallen in the sense that he is sinful, but not fallen in the sense that he was once sinless. I cannot concur with those who think that anything material hangs upon the decision of this question. It would not, so far as appears, in the least affect the views which experience and Scripture suggest, whether of the nature of God and the method of His government, or of the nature of man and the method of salvation through Christ. In my humble opinion, it would rather smooth away a number of serious difficulties that at present clog and disfigure our theological system. It would harmonise much better with the New Testament representations regarding the world and man, his natural state, and the method of deliverance from it. And it would show the divine government, if not in a more amiable, or less inscrutable and mysterious, at least in a much more just, impartial, and consistent light—I mean, of course, from a human point of view. It would, at any rate, have the merit of placing the first man on a footing of perfect equality with all his descendants, and treating him exactly as they are treated—which would surely be a step in the direction of even-handed justice. And yet I am aware that many will shrink with horror from the very suggestion, as if it was to fasten the most hideous of charges on the character of Almighty God. We must, however, attend to facts. On the showing of the most bigoted traditionalist, evil existed in the universe previous to the fall of man, and that previously existing evil was a main factor in producing human sinfulness. The woman was tempted by the serpent, and the man by the woman. In this sense, and to this extent, sinful men are of their father the devil, and the works of their father they do. Thus, the origin of evil in primitive man, not less than in all his descendants, is thrown back on a source external to himself, and the problem of how evil came to exist in the world does not appear to be in the least aggravated by the supposition that the constitution of man never was different from what it is now.

I know, indeed, that the first man is credited with having possessed a certain magical freedom of will, the abuse of which is supposed to afford an adequate explanation of all the evil

that ever has existed, or shall yet exist, in the world. Men who can find any satisfaction in such figments are welcome to it. For my own part, I cannot see that any freedom of will, conceivable or inconceivable, would in the least relieve any moral difficulty connected with the existence of evil, except just that it would set in a slightly more satisfactory light the suffering and death of *the first man himself*. But there is no reason to think that the mental faculties of the first man were in any respect different from those of his descendants; on the contrary, there is every reason to think that his conscious acts were prompted and determined by the ideas present to his mind, precisely as our own are. There is no evidence that man would have fallen but for the temptation of the serpent, and, therefore, in the absence of proof to the contrary, the serpent must be regarded as the *cause* of human sin. Why the serpent was permitted so to ruin the human race is a question neither more nor less difficult to solve than would be the question why the human race was permitted to develop out of the elements of a world already tainted by sin, or the still prior question why sin was permitted to enter the world at all.

Again, it appears to be absolutely certain, on scientific grounds, that evil, suffering, and death existed in the world long before the creation of man. The existence of this evil must in any case be accounted for, and to suppose that it was the cause of human sinfulness would not multiply or complicate, but rather lessen and simplify the problems requiring to be solved. If it was consistent with the character and government of God to permit evil to enter and pervade the world, how could His character and government be compromised by permitting it to extend to the human constitution?

Once more, there are multitudes of facts occurring daily under the Divine government that appear every whit as hard to account for as would be the development of man from the sinful elements of the world around him. For example, there is the case of infants suffering and dying before any conscious sin has been committed. It is doubted whether any such infants will suffer and die eternally. Very well. But, at any

rate, it cannot be denied that they suffer and die temporally. The temporal suffering and death of infants is a fact that cannot be gainsaid. The eternal suffering and death of, at least, some of them is a possibility; for the arguments in support of the universal salvation of infants resemble the arguments in support of the universal salvation of adults in that they are of an extremely questionable character. Anyhow, it does not appear that there is any difference in principle between temporal death and eternal death in relation to the Divine government. To say that while it is perfectly just to inflict any amount of suffering on infants in time, it would be monstrously unjust to extend that suffering into eternity, is not reasoning, but wanton assertion, destitute alike of authority and probability. To say that the temporal suffering of infants is not penal, but merely natural, will not mend matters, for then their eternal suffering, if they have such, and the temporal as well as the eternal suffering of adults must be not penal, but merely natural, in which case it will neither be a whit less difficult to account for, nor a whit more easy to bear. On the other hand, if it be alleged that the first sin of the first man is imputed to every infant as soon as it comes into existence, and that this renders it just and reasonable that infants should suffer and die temporally, or, if need be, eternally, it may be replied, in the first place, that this is not a fact, as I shall prove presently, and, secondly, that even if it were, the man must have a strange moral consciousness who could see therein any alleviation of the difficulty. Thus, then, if it be consistent with the method of Divine government that infants should suffer and die in consequence of having received from nature a sinful perishing constitution, how can it be inconsistent with the method of Divine government that primitive man should have suffered and died in consequence of having received from nature a sinful perishing constitution? Other facts of a similar character might easily be mentioned, but I forbear.

On the whole, it appears to me that the denial or disproof of an historical fall, and the affirmation that man always has been what he is now, would not in the least affect what ought to be our present ideas, on the one hand, of the nature of God



and the method of His government, and, on the other hand, of the nature of man and the method of salvation through Christ. The sinfulness of human nature would remain the same fact of experience that it is now ; redemption from sin through faith in Jesus Christ would likewise remain the same fact of experience that it is now ; and as for the difficulties involved in the existence of evil, these, too, would remain precisely what they are, neither increased nor diminished ; and it would still be open to us to unite with the greatest of the apostles in saying, " Nay, but, O man ! who art thou that repliest against God ? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, why didst Thou make me thus ? Or, hath not the potter power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel unto honour and another unto dishonour ? " The problem presented by the existence of evil is an awful fact that refuses to be either masked or minimised by metaphysical cobwebs, and the sooner we come to realise its insolubility so much the better. Men who affect horror at the idea that the suggestions of modern science may, after all, prove to be correct need to be reminded of the words of the poet—

" O, but, man, proud man !  
Dressed in a little brief authority,  
Most ignorant of what he's most assured—  
His glassy essence ; like an angry ape,  
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven,  
As make the angels weep."

But, as has been said, the question as to the origin and early history of man is one that scientific men must be allowed to decide for us. It is to be hoped that their decision will be forthcoming clear, unanimous, and thoroughly established, in due course. Theologians may chafe under it as they please. Of one thing we may rest assured, they will be compelled to retire in the end, with all their wretched evasions and explanations and reconciliations, covered with confusion as deep and abiding as that which has attended their futile attempts to set aside the findings of science on the general question of creation. For our part, we may say, in the words of Dr. Charles

Hodge, though in a slightly different sense from that which he intended, "The believer may calmly await the result."

Passing now to the second of the two passages referred to above, let us see how far it will either confirm or set aside the fundamental ideas elicited from the first. The paragraph in which it is contained is regarded by many—and not without considerable show of reason—as the most difficult in the whole Bible. It will, therefore, require to be examined with some care.

The aim of the apostle throughout the paragraph is to institute a comparison—which turns out to be a parallel and contrast—between the means and method of human ruin, supposed to be already known, and the means and method of human restoration, which it is the leading object of the whole epistle to unfold. He opens the parallel in v. 12; but accessory thoughts, in the shape of proof of what has been said, crowd in, and occupy the whole of vv. 13 and 14, excepting the last clause; so that the parallel begun in v. 12 cannot well be completed in a regular manner. Hence the apodosis to v. 12 is not explicitly stated, but is implicitly contained in the concluding clause of v. 14, "Who is a type of the coming One." The regular form of statement, omitting the accessory matter, would be as follows:—"Therefore, as by one man, sin invaded the world, and through sin death, and so death pervaded all men, for that all did sin, so also by one Man righteousness has invaded (*cf.* *ἐγγύερται*, 1 Cor. xv. 20) the world, and through righteousness life, and so life shall pervade all men, for that all shall do righteousness." On the first blush, this appears to agree entirely with the statement of 1 Cor. xv. 22 as above explained: "As in and through the man Adam's (sinful) nature all die, so also in and through the Man Christ's (righteous) nature all shall be made alive." A closer examination will reveal the fact that there is difference as well as agreement between the two statements.

The parallel, we say, ends abruptly and irregularly in the concluding clause of v. 14. A resumption is, of course, to be anticipated. But this cannot take place immediately. For the points of contrast rush into the apostle's mind, and press

for immediate utterance, and these points occupy vv. 15, 16, and 17. Not till v. 18 is reached is the thread broken off at v. 14 again taken up. There, however, the parallel of vv. 12-14 is resumed, and repeated regularly and fully, and in two different forms of language, the one being explicative of the other. The intermediate verses will be dealt with by-and-by. Meanwhile, let us look at the main parallel as it is presented anew in vv. 18 and 19.

The following would be a correct rendering of these verses : "So, then, as through the wrong deed of one [man the judgment pervaded] all men unto condemnation, so also through the righteous doing of One [Man the acquittal shall pervade] all men unto justification of life. For as through the disobedience of the one man [Adam] the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the One [Man Christ] the many shall be made righteous." The Revisers' rendering is different, but I must take leave to dissent from it for various reasons, of which the following are the most important.

It is plain that the two verses now quoted correspond exactly, or almost exactly, to 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22, the only difference being the tenses of the verbs, which are either inserted or should be supplied in the opening members of each. In Corinthians the present tense is used in the latter verse, and should be supplied in the former ; here the aorist is used in the latter verse, and should be supplied in the former. In the closing members the future tense is used in the latter verse, and should be supplied in the former, both here and in Corinthians.

Further, these two verses correspond exactly to the parallel started, but abruptly and irregularly closed, in vv. 12-14. They are, in fact, a resumption and repetition of what the apostle there said, or, at least, intended to say when the opening clauses were formed. The apostle begins again from the very beginning, and expresses himself very much as if nothing had yet been said in the way of instituting a parallel. "So, then" (*ἄρα οὖν*) in v. 18, answers to "therefore" (*διὰ τοῦτο*) in v. 12, though it would be too much to restrict the reference of "so then" to the matter preceding v. 12 ; it rather points back *generally* to all that has gone before, just as "therefore" itself does.

Let it be clearly noted how entirely these three forms of the one parallel correspond to each other. In 1 Cor. xv. 21 we find "by *a* man;" in Rom. v. 12 we find still more explicitly "by *one* man;" in Rom. v. 18 we find "by [the wrong deed of] *one*:" that is to say, in every case the parallel lies between agents or individuals, not between acts, and in every case those individuals when first introduced are referred to *indefinitely*. But mark the continuation. In 1 Cor. xv. 22 we find "in *the* Adam" and "in *the* Christ," the article evidently referring back to the indefinite "man" of the previous verse. In Rom. v. 19 we find "by [the disobedience of] *the one* man," and "by [the obedience of] *the One*," the particles of definition again referring to the undefined individuals of the previous verse. Similarly, in Rom. v. 15 and 17, "*the one*" and "*the one* Man Jesus Christ" owe their definiteness to the previous occurrence of the indefinite "man" in v. 12. (The two occurrences of the anarthrous "one" in v. 16 will be noticed presently).

Observe, on the other hand, that were the Revisers' rendering adopted, and the word "one" in v. 18 made to agree with trespass, &c., not only would the parallelism be thrown into complete confusion, but the reasoning in v. 19 would be nullified entirely, it would no longer be reasoning at all. For the point of v. 18 would be that the condemnation and justification of men are accomplished by *single acts*; while the point of v. 19 is that men are made sinful and righteous by the disobedience and the obedience of *single individuals*. The possession of sinfulness and of righteousness are the grounds respectively of condemnation and justification, but the fact that the sinfulness and righteousness of men can be traced to single individuals has no necessary connection with the entirely distinct fact that the condemnation and justification of men are due to single acts. On the other hand, if we follow the rendering adopted above, which is that of the Authorised Version, the reasoning is clear and convincing. If the sinfulness and righteousness of men, the grounds respectively of their condemnation and justification, can be traced to the disobedience and the obedience of two definite single individuals, then it follows that the condemnation and justification of men may



be said to be due respectively to the wrong doing and the righteous doing of two indefinite single individuals.

But this is not all. The statement that the justification of men is due to a single righteous act, in like manner as their condemnation can be traced to a single sinful act, would offer the most explicit contradiction to the main thought contained in the previous section of the paragraph (vv. 15-17), as a very slight consideration will show.

What I take to be the correct reading, rendering, and general import of this very difficult section shall be stated with all possible brevity. "But not as [was] the trespass, so also [is] the grace-gift. For if by the trespass of the one the many died, much more [is it that] the grace of God and the gift in the grace of the one Man Jesus Christ hath abounded unto the many. And not as [it was] through one [person] that sinned, [so also is] the gift. For the judgment [was] from one [person] unto condemnation, but the acquittal [shall be] from many trespasses unto justification of life. For if by the trespass of the one death reigned through the one, much more [is it that] they who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life through the one Jesus Christ."

The condensation of thought in these verses is probably unequalled, at least in the New Testament. So baffling is it to unravel, that one is at first tempted to suspect that the apostle, "inebriated by the exuberance of his own verbosity," has thrown out a variety of words and phrases without knowing very distinctly what he would be at, and especially that he has mangled and distorted the parallelism in well-nigh every verse for the purpose of mystifying and perplexing his reader, and for no other end or purpose whatever. Yet it is true, I believe, that the language has been selected and weighed with extreme care, and that a deeper examination will convince the boldest sceptic (Jowett himself not excepted) that scarcely a word could be altered or left out save at the expense of modifying quite essentially the writer's meaning. Let us try whether we can present the thought, expanded to normal dimensions, and in as regular and intelligible a form as possible.

“But not as was the wrong deed, so also is the grace-produced righteous doing. For since it was by the *single* wrong deed of the one that the many died, it is a much greater thing that by the *abundant* righteous doing, produced by the grace of the One, the many shall live. And not as condemnation was through [a single sinful act of] a single sinful agent, so also justification shall be through a single righteous act [of a single righteous agent]. For the adverse judgment, resulting in condemnation, sprang from the existence of *one* [wrong deed of one] wrong doer, but the favourable judgment, resulting in justification, shall spring from the non-existence of *many* wrong deeds [of many wrong doers = from the existence of much grace-produced righteous doing of many righteous doers]. For since it was by the *single* wrong deed of the one that death reigned through the one, it is a much greater thing that by the *abundant* righteous doing of the many, produced by the grace of the One, life shall reign through the One.”

It will be seen that there are two points of contrast between the method of ruin and the method of restoration specified in these three verses, one of which is stated in the first half of v. 15, and supported by an explicative reason in the second half; the other of which is stated in the first half of v. 16, and supported by an explicative reason in the second half; which latter, not being sufficiently explicit, is in turn supported by an explicative reason in v. 17. The first and principal point of contrast is, that whereas the ruin of mankind is effected by a *unit*, that is, by the smallest possible amount of sin, the restoration of mankind is effected by *abundance*, that is, by a great amount—not exactly of righteousness, because that is not a thing that can be transferred from one person to another without the intervention of a medium, but—of grace, as the medium through which righteousness is imparted to the believer on Christ. The second and subordinate point of contrast is, that whereas the ruin of mankind is effected by one sinful act *on the part of a single individual*, the restoration of mankind is effected through the bringing to nought of many sinful acts or much sin, or (which is the same thing) by many righteous acts or much righteousness—created, it is true,

through the grace of a single individual, but still much righteousness—*on the part of many individuals.*

Though I entertain little doubt that the above is a correct account of the apostle's meaning, one or two words may be thought necessary in explanation and confirmation of it. And, first, as to v. 15. It is clear from the connection that "the grace-gift" (τὸ χάρισμα) is identical with "the gift" (ἡ δωρεὰ) contained potentially "in the grace of the one Man Jesus Christ" (v. 15), and this again is the same thing as "the gift of righteousness" (τῆς δωρεᾶς τῆς δικαιοσύνης), which is the equivalent resulting from the possession of "the grace" (τῆς χάριτος) of God or of Christ (v. 17). The "grace-gift" is, therefore, righteousness, considered as the fruit or product of the grace of God received through Christ, and received, as we know it is received, by faith. The "grace of God," again, whereby men are created in righteousness, renewed, restored or saved, raised from death in trespasses and sins unto justification and life in fellowship with God, is practically identical with the Spirit of God, as witness the following among many passages: "But God, being rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive [by His Spirit (Rom. viii. 9-11; John vi. 63, &c.)] with Christ (by grace have ye been saved), and raised us up with Him, and made us to sit with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus; that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus; for by grace have ye been saved through faith, and this [salvation through faith] is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; it is not of works that no man should glory, for we are His workmanship [not our own], created [in righteousness (iv. 24)] in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them" (Eph. ii. 4-10). "But when the kindness of God our Saviour and His love toward man [= "the grace of God that bringeth salvation to all men" (Tit. ii. 11)] appeared, not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He poured out upon us richly [*cf.* "exceeding riches of

His grace" (Eph. ii. 7)] through Jesus Christ our Saviour, in order that, having been justified by His grace, we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Tit. iii. 4-7). Passages like these, which might be multiplied to almost any extent, leave no room for doubt that the process of salvation or restoration from sin and death to righteousness and life is effected by the power of the Holy Ghost, who is the agent or instrument of regeneration, renewal, or resurrection, who, therefore, embodies in Himself the saving grace conferred on believers by God through Jesus Christ. And this is the reason why, in the verses before us, the apostle was compelled to forsake the strict parallel form, and put the grace of God or of Christ, instead of the righteousness of Christ (which theologians would fain put), as the antithesis to the sin of Adam. Believers are saved through the one Man Jesus Christ, as they are lost through the one man Adam, but not because the proper righteousness of Christ becomes through faith their immediate possession—rather because their new creation or restoration to the image of God is accomplished, not by their own works or powers, but by the power and working of the Holy Ghost, whom God graciously bestows through Christ. The "gift of righteousness" is indeed imparted to the believer by God, but it is imparted, not actually or in itself (that is impossible and absurd), but potentially or "in the grace [= the Spirit (Rom. viii. 9, 10)] of the one Man Jesus Christ."

Coming to v. 16, an interesting and instructive, if not absolutely important, variety of reading meets us, and must be considered. Instead of "through one that sinned" (*δι' ἐνὸς ἁμαρτήσαντος*) the so-called Western authorities read "through one sin" (*δι' ἐνὸς ἁμαρτήματος*). If this latter reading were accepted, we should have to translate the verse, "And not as [it was] through one sin [so also shall it be as to] the gift; for the judgment was from one [trespass] unto condemnation, but the acquittal [shall be] from many trespasses unto justification of life"—the meaning of which might be expressed by the paraphrase, "And not as condemnation was through a single sinful act, so also justification shall be through a single righteous act; for the adverse judgment,



resulting in condemnation, sprang from the existence of *one* wrong deed, but the favourable judgment, resulting in justification, shall spring from the non-existence of *many* wrong deeds [= from the existence of many righteous deeds]." Now, there is no denying that this looks exceedingly plausible, at any rate, at first sight. It is as simple and easily intelligible as the better attested reading is harsh, difficult, and obscure. But this very fact lays it open to the grave suspicion of being just the correction of a copyist, who could not understand the original reading. And the suspicion is completely confirmed when we subject the two readings to minute and careful scrutiny. For while the more weakly attested reading will not bear examination even for a moment, the other is felt to be entirely suitable as soon as we understand it. Many objections might be urged against the reading *ἀμάρτημα*. In the first place, it is not at all evident why the apostle should have used that particular word with reference to the sin of Adam, when everywhere else throughout the section (vv. 15-17)—even we must suppose in the subjoined confirmative sentence—Adam's sin is referred to by *παράπτωμα*. A more serious objection, however, is the absence of the word "trespass" in the first member of the confirmative sentence. When the apostle writes, "For the judgment [was] from *one* unto condemnation, but the acquittal [shall be] from many trespasses unto justification," it is extremely precarious to supply the word *trespass* after *one*, and that for two reasons: (1) because elsewhere in the paragraph (vv. 12-21) when *one* or *the one* stands alone (as it does no less than seven times, without counting the other occurrence in the verse under consideration) it is the word *man* or *person* that must be supplied along with it; and (2) because no reason whatever can be assigned for the omission of the word "trespass," which is elsewhere always expressed, and which, if omitted here, would not only have rendered the style intolerably abrupt, but, in view of the prevailing usage, would have led inevitably to misunderstanding. On the other hand, if the word "one" (*ἑνός*) in the first half of the verse be taken as agreeing with *man* understood (as it must be with the reading *ἀμαρτήσαντος*), the same word "one" (*ἑνός*) in the second half of the verse must likewise be taken as agreeing

with *man* understood, and the entire correspondence of the two makes the reference of the latter to the former perfectly clear; the whole being clenched and confirmed by the prevailing *personal* usage of *one*, not only in the present paragraph, but in human speech generally.

But the most serious objection of all to the reading ἀμάρτημα is, that it would turn a verse which, with the other reading, is more pregnant with subtle thought than, perhaps, any other verse in the New Testament into a vapid, feeble, purposeless repetition of the previous verse. For with the reading ἀμαρτήματα, v. 16 would contain the very same point of contrast which was already stated and explained in v. 15, and that point would be stated and explained over again, with all the pomp of an introductory “and,” in a balanced categorical proposition, supported by a balanced explicative reason, after the model of the previous verse, as if something new and equally important were being set forth! Not only so, but it would be utterly impossible after *two* such statements and explications to see any real point, bearing, or purpose in v. 17 at all. That verse would have to be regarded as another verbose and meaningless repetition of the latter half of v. 15, for which there was not the smallest need. It would contribute in no degree to clear up the meaning either of v. 15 or of v. 16, and, in particular, it would leave entirely unexplained—what stands very much in need of explanation—the apostle’s reason for putting forward the grace of God or of Christ, instead of the righteousness of Christ, as the direct antithesis to the sin of Adam. Surely such empty and unmeaning tautology is out of the question in the very heart of a paragraph than which nothing more grand in its conception, or more teeming with significance, is contained in the Bible or in human literature, presenting, as it does, in sublimely condensed outline, a complete philosophy of the entire religious history of the whole human race! So different, on the other hand, is the result obtained by adopting the reading ἀμαρτήσαντος, that every word in vv. 16 and 17 is instinct with fresh meaning, and the latter verse is quite essential in order to a full understanding of the former. The use of the indefinite “one” in v. 16, instead of “the one” as

in the verse preceding, and in the verse following, is, of course, due to the necessity of balancing "many trespasses," which, being introduced here for the first time, could not be referred to definitely. Thus, on full consideration, the findings of external evidence are completely borne out by those of internal, and the true reading is placed beyond dispute.

That the subjects requiring to be supplied in the first half of v. 16 must be gathered from the argumentative sentence in the second half ("condemnation"—"justification") is self-evident, and that "the gift" (τὸ δῶρημα) must be referred to the righteousness of believers, considered as the actual embodiment of the grace of God, received by faith through Christ, is clear from v. 17, where the life consequent on justification is said to belong to "those who receive [*scil.* by faith] the abundance of the grace [of God] and of the gift of righteousness [produced thereby] through the one Man Jesus Christ." The antithesis to "not as it was through one that did sin" can be nothing else than "so also it is through One that did righteousness," and this implies that though, in accordance with vv. 12-14, and again with vv. 18, 19, men are restored through one Man, as truly as they are ruined through one man, yet, in accordance with v. 21, they are not restored *in exactly the same way*, but rather in a way similar to that in which men are ruined *by themselves*. The sin of Adam, namely, ruins men by acting upon them from without (the principle on which it is supposed to act will be defined immediately), never becoming part of their personal character; the righteousness produced by the grace of Christ, through which men are saved, is righteousness that has been appropriated and made part of their personal character, just as truly so as the sin of which the law convicts them (vv. 20, 21).

Again, when we compare the language in the latter half of v. 16 with that of v. 15, on the one hand, and of v. 18, on the other, the parallelism is found to yield the following proportion:—As κρῖμα (v. 16) is to παράπτωμα (v. 15), so is χάρισμα (v. 16) to χάρισμα (v. 15). In like manner, as κατὰκρῖμα (v. 16) is to παράπτωμα (v. 18), so is δικαίωμα (v. 16) to δικαίωμα (v. 18). This must be held to settle decisively the fact that the words χάρισμα and δικαίωμα are

used in two distinct senses, and also what these senses are. In v. 15 the word *χάρισμα* corresponds to *παράπτωμα*, and designates the ground of justification as *παράπτωμα* does the ground of condemnation. In v. 16 the word *χάρισμα* corresponds to *κρίμα*, and designates the sentence (*sententia*) or judgment resulting in justification as *κρίμα* does the sentence or judgment resulting in condemnation; so that when *κρίμα* is translated judgment, meaning thereby adverse or condemnatory judgment, *χάρισμα* must be translated acquittal, meaning thereby favourable (gracious) or justificatory judgment. In like manner, in v. 18 the word *δικαίωμα* corresponds to *παράπτωμα*, and designates the ground of justification as *παράπτωμα* does the ground of condemnation. In v. 16 the word *δικαίωμα* corresponds to *κατάκριμα*, and designates the act of justification as *κατάκριμα* does the act of condemnation. It thus appears that we might almost frame another proportion, and say: as *χάρισμα* (v. 16) is to *χάρισμα* (v. 15), so is *δικαίωμα* (v. 16) to *δικαίωμα* (v. 18). *Χάρισμα* (v. 15) is quite identical in meaning with *δικαίωμα* (v. 18), the former designating the ground of justification by reference to its source in the Divine grace, the latter designating the ground of justification by reference to itself as the actual embodiment in righteousness of what was potential in grace. *Χάρισμα* (v. 16) is almost, if not altogether, identical with *δικαίωμα* (v. 16), both words designating the act or process of justification, the former by reference to its source and from the subjective point of view, the latter by reference to its nature and from the objective point of view.

Further, the use of the identical term (*παραπτωμάτων*) in the apodosis with that which is latent in the protasis (*παράπτωμα*), instead of the corresponding obverse term, renders it self-evident that some such word as annihilation or non-existence should be supplied, since it is quite impossible that justification should spring from many trespasses in the same respect that condemnation springs from a single trespass, or in any other than an opposite respect. What commentators say about the multitude of men's sins exciting the *compassion* of God to justify them in the same manner that the one transgression of Adam excited the *righteousness* of God to condemn



them, is so palpably nonsensical, and so utterly opposed to the whole tenor of Scripture, that one is almost ashamed to mention it. What evidence is there that the *compassion* of God is excited by sin at all? What evidence is there that God's compassion would not be excited by a single transgression just as readily as by a thousand? What evidence is there that it was not the first sin of Adam that moved God to redeem the world, and not "many trespasses" that followed after it? There is no evidence whatever on any of these points. The last is notoriously contrary to common opinion, which holds that the plan of redemption was not only projected, but put in operation, as soon as the first sin had been committed. The apostle's language in the closing member of v. 16 is fully explained by the well-known facts of Christian experience, which are briefly glanced at in the corresponding member of v. 17. The abundance of God's grace resides in Jesus Christ, and is embodied in His righteousness: through Him it is propagated to all believers, and embodied in their righteousness, when they have become new creatures in Christ Jesus. Simultaneous with the process of creating or bringing into existence the new creature characterised by righteousness—a process that took effect on the person of Christ, through the working of the Divine Spirit, as it takes effect on the person of each believer, through the working of the Divine Spirit—is the process of destroying or putting out of existence the old creature characterised by sin. Justification is the acknowledgment or recognition of the righteousness possessed by the new creature, and this acknowledgment succeeds, presupposes, and rests upon the annihilation of the sin belonging to the old creature. It follows that justification may be said to spring *either* from the creation or existence of the much righteousness or many righteous acts belonging to Christ, and in Him to the whole new creation, *or* from the annihilation or non-existence of the much sin or many trespasses belonging to the whole old creation. The two phrases describe—the one positively, the other negatively—the result of the double-sided process which theologians speak of as sanctification, that result being indicated just as frequently, and also just as clearly, by one or other of these phrases as by both combined.

The popular notion respecting *χάρισμα*, particularly in the clause before us, is that it denotes *forgiveness*, by which is meant the cancelling of the guilt as distinguished from the destruction of the principle of sin, a notion which plays a quite marvellous part in the current systems of theology. According to the "evangelical" conception, the whole of salvation appears to be summed up in this idea of forgiveness. We meet it everywhere—even in Rom. vi.-viii., according to some—in the epistle to the Hebrews, there is nothing else, according to others. If we are to believe theologians, guilt and not sin is the thing from which Jesus came to save His people. "Are you saved?" the ultra-evangelical will ask you; meaning, have your past sins been pardoned? The man is saved the moment his guilt is cancelled: the removal of sin itself is a matter of the utmost insignificance; at least, it is quite secondary, and hardly worth mentioning when salvation is under discussion. The central doctrine of Christianity is not regeneration by the power of the Spirit of God but "the atonement"—a ghastly piece of scenic display drawn from the Jewish-heathen ritual—which is supposed to lie behind *forgiveness*. All this, however, is the baseless fabric of a wrong-headed scholasticism. The introduction of the *bare* idea of forgiveness in the present passage would throw everything into complete confusion; it would destroy the parallelism, invalidate the argument, violate the grammar and lexicography; in fact, it would land us in absolute nonsense. How could the cancelling of guilt be said to spring from many trespasses in contrast to the sentence of condemnation which (as the apostle will have it) springs from one trespass? The thing is absurd. Besides, it is not guilt that forms the antithesis to righteousness, either here or anywhere else, but sin as an attribute of moral character. The antithesis of guilt is not righteousness but merit, a thing of which there is not a trace in the whole epistle. *Χάρισμα*, therefore, in v. 16, does not and cannot mean forgiveness, but points to the formal sentence of acquittal whereby acknowledgment is made of the righteousness possessed by the parties on whom judgment is passed. The language of v. 17, whose avowed object is to explain that of v. 16, puts this beyond possibility

of doubt. For in that verse "those who receive the abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness," as the condition of enjoying life eternal, are identical with those on whom the χάρισμα resulting in justification is passed. Now, it is quite absurd to pretend that by "the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness" is meant forgiveness or the cancelling of guilt. Everything in the world would have to mean forgiveness at such a rate. Forgiveness is not the sole nor even the principal condition of enjoying life eternal. Forgiveness is not the alone passport to entering heaven. On the contrary, it is a mere accessory to repentance or renewal, on which it is entirely dependent. The condition of entering heaven, and enjoying life eternal, is deliverance not from guilt merely or mainly, but from sin itself, and the possession of righteousness consequent on that deliverance; and "those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness" are those whom the grace of God, operating in and through the Spirit of God, has made new creatures in Christ Jesus, created in righteousness and holiness of truth, quickened or made alive from death in trespasses and sins to eternal life with Christ in God. Those who have thus been quickened or raised from the dead are indeed "forgiven all their trespasses" (Col. ii. 13), but forgiveness is a purely accessory process or series of acts which follow as a matter of course on the process of repentance, renewal, regeneration, or resurrection—the putting off of the old man and the putting on of the new. And this accounts for the subordinate place which it occupies in the Epistle to the Romans. Salvation, the subject of this epistle, consists not in forgiveness but in righteousness, which presupposes the removal not of guilt merely but of sin itself. As for "the atonement"—there is no such thing—at least, in the vulgar acceptation of the word. "The atonement" is an Old Testament, not a New Testament ceremony, being simply a physical picture or parable, borrowed from the Jewish-heathen ritual system, and applied to illustrate and commend the Gospel scheme of salvation of which it is imagined, though quite erroneously, to have been instituted by God for a typical representation. Forgiveness is conferred absolutely by God without the intervention of any fictions such as the imputation

of atoning merit. It depends directly on repentance, and on that alone, and that has nothing whatever to do with an atonement as commonly conceived, but consists in a transformation of the mind or spirit from a state of sin to a state of righteousness, through the power and working of the Spirit of God. But of this more hereafter.

Such, then, is the argument of these three verses. Its bearing on the rendering of v. 18 is too obvious to require pointing out. *Both* the points of contrast which the apostle signalises are based on nothing, if they are not based on the fact that justification and life are *not* through a single act of righteousness, as condemnation and death are through a single act of sin. Justification and life are so far from being through a single righteous act of a single individual, that they are through the many righteous acts of many individuals, albeit all these righteous acts spring from the much grace of a single individual. It is beyond question, therefore, that the meaning of v. 18 is correctly expressed by, "So then, as through the wrong deed of one [man the judgment pervaded] all men unto condemnation, so also through the righteous doing of One [man the acquittal shall pervade] all men unto justification of life." The subjects requiring to be supplied are, of course, those found in v. 16, and the predicates those found in v. 12. "Justification of life" means justification whose outcome or reward is life, and the life referred to is life in fellowship with God—spiritual and eternal life (v. 21).

The apostle, it has been said, endeavours to prove that the original trespass of Adam is the means of occasioning the condemnation and death of all mankind in much the same manner as the grace or righteousness of Christ is the means of occasioning the justification and life of all believers. This is done in vv. 13 and 14. But it is not done in the way that we should anticipate. These verses furnish the *rationale* of the "so" (*οὕτως*) in v. 12. They explain how all men, while they died on the ground that they sinned, died also *in consequence of Adam having sinned the primal sin*. What we expect, however, is proof that Adam's transgression was the ultimate source, the originating cause, of men's own sin, and, through that sin, of their condemnation and death. In other words,



we expect the apostle to assert and prove the theological doctrine of original sin. If Adam, by sinning the primal sin, corrupted his own nature, which he transmitted, so corrupted, to all his descendants; if all men sin in consequence of possessing this corrupted nature derived from Adam; if there is no reason to think that all men would sin and die but for the fact that they inherit a nature prone to sin, and already subject to death: then it appears to follow that the primal sin of Adam is the cause—the ultimate if not the immediate cause—of the condemnation and death of all men. The doctrine of original sin, as commonly taught by theologians, appears to afford by far the best available basis for the parallel which it is the writer's aim to establish. Strange to say, however, the apostle ignores entirely what would have been so cogent and conclusive an argument, and uses another so weak and inconclusive as to lead one inevitably to infer that he knew nothing of the doctrine of original sin commonly so called. He does not assert either the natural necessary sinfulness, or the natural necessary mortality of the descendants of Adam in the present passage; nor does he trace the actual overt sins of men to the fact that they are born in Adam's nature; he simply asserts—what he endeavoured to prove in chapters i.-iii.—that, as a matter of empirical fact, “all have sinned” (πάντες ἡμῶν, v. 12, cf. iii. 23). Had the apostle intended to teach the doctrine of original sin, he would have expressed himself thus: “Therefore, as by one man sin invaded the world, and through sin death, and so *sin pervaded all men, and through sin death.*” Such a statement would have corresponded admirably, on the apostle's own showing, with the case as regards Christ and believers: “So also by one man (grace-produced) righteousness has invaded the world, and through righteousness life, and so (grace-produced) righteousness shall pervade all men, and through righteousness life.” The parallel, so stated, would bring into prominence the self-propagating character of the Divine grace, the “not-of-works” principle upon which the apostle insists so much. The *rationale* of the “so” (οὕτως) in both cases would lie in the fact that sin and righteousness or grace tend, when once introduced into the world, to propagate themselves naturally,

or, at least, necessarily and irresistibly. As a matter of fact, however, the apostle expresses himself thus: "Therefore, as by one man sin invaded the world, and through sin death, and so *death pervaded all men, for that all did sin.*" In this statement, it is not the sin of all men that is connected with the sin of Adam through the medium of a corrupted nature propagated from the one to the other, but it is the death of all men that is connected with the sin of Adam through the medium of the personal overt acts of sin which each man *as a matter of empirical fact* has committed; and the *rationale* of the "so" (*οὕτως*), which forms the connecting link, is given in a way that is not only feeble, forced, partial, and inconclusive, but that has nothing at all corresponding to it on the other side of the parallel.

The argument is of so peculiarly subtle and unreasonable-looking a character, that it is no marvel if interpreters have been perplexed by it. After stating in the close of v. 12 that all men, from Adam downwards, committed sin, the apostle proceeds: "For until the law there was sin in the world [= men committed sin], but sin [though committed] is not imputed while there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those [of that period] that did not sin after the likeness of the transgression of Adam [and therefore could not have had their sin imputed to them *except on an extrinsic ground*, which is not stated, but left to be inferred]." The apostle's argument is this:—Before death can take place sin must not only have been committed, but must have been imputed. Sin cannot be imputed *on its own account*, unless it is committed in opposition to law, or express command. There were men between Adam and Moses who sinned neither in opposition to the law (which had not yet been given), nor in opposition to an express command (such commands were given only in special cases), but who, nevertheless, died, and whose sins must, therefore, have been imputed *on account of Adam's first sin*. From this the apostle proceeds to draw the sweeping conclusion that the first sin of Adam is the cause of the death of *all* men, in much the same sense that the grace or righteousness of Christ is the cause of the life of all believers.

That the above is a correct account of the apostle's argument will not be difficult to show. In v. 12 it is said expressly that "death pervaded all men *on the ground that all sinned*" (ἐφ' ᾧ πάντες ἥμαρτον). This proves that the personal sins of men were the immediate ground or occasion of their condemnation and death. It will not do to assume that by "all sinned" is meant "all were reckoned to have sinned" Adam's transgression. For not only would such an interpretation violate every principle of lexicography, and that to a perfectly ludicrous extent; not only would it go directly in the teeth of the principle enunciated in the same breath that "sin is not imputed while there is no law"; not only would it contradict what is said in v. 14, that some men between Adam and Moses did not sin a sin like Adam's, and, therefore, presumably, did *not* sin Adam's identical sin; not only would it falsify the statement that "through *one* man"—and not, therefore, through *all* men—"sin invaded the world;" but it would land us in downright nonsense as soon as we enter the following verse. For if we assume that by "sinned," in the close of v. 12, is meant "sinned Adam's first sin by imputation," or "had Adam's first sin reckoned" to them, and if we carry this meaning into v. 13—which the confirmative particle (γὰρ) compels us to do, otherwise the argument will be completely dislocated—then we obtain the following proposition:—"Adam's first sin imputed was rendered unimputable in the period between Adam and Moses by the fact that the law had not been given; but in virtue and as proof of a causal bond between Adam's first sin and the death of all his posterity, such of his pre-Mosaic posterity as did not sin a sin like his own, were, nevertheless, visited with the penalty of death." Surely the mere statement of such a proposition is enough to show its utter absurdity. On the other hand, if we assume that the meaning of the word "sin" is suddenly and completely changed when we pass from v. 12 to v. 13, we shall be attributing a kind and amount of word-juggling to the apostle that would render it utterly impossible in any given case to understand what he means from what he says. Not to insist on the extreme dislocation thus introduced into the argument, what is the writer and reasoner made to say?

In v. 12 the apostle is made to assert that all men *sinned* Adam's first transgression; in v. 14, he asserts that some men between Adam and Moses *did not sin* a transgression like Adam's, in other words, *did not sin* Adam's transgression. In v. 13, the apostle asserts that sin is not imputed while there is no law; in v. 12, he is made to assert that Adam's transgression is imputed to all men, not only without law, but without being even committed by them at all. In v. 13, the apostle expresses the idea of imputation by the word *impute* (ἐλλογέω), which word must have been present to his mind when he wrote v. 12; in v. 12, he is made to express the idea of imputation by nothing at all, or else by a part of the word *sin* (ἁμαρτάνω), and this, though the word impute is already present to his mind, to be used when he requires it. In v. 13, the word *sin* (ἁμαρτία) expresses the idea of sin; in v. 12, the word *sin* (ἁμαρτάνω) is alleged to express an entirely different idea—the imputation of sin. In the opening of v. 12 the apostle says, that through *one* man sin entered into the world; in the close of v. 12, he is credited with saying, that when Adam sinned all sinned, which would imply that through *all* men sin entered into the world. Is it not inconceivable, that any writer, who was not determined to be unintelligible, should make the three successive statements, "Sin entered *into* the world," "All sinned," "Sin was *in* the world," while by sin in the second he meant an entirely different thing from sin in the two others, and a thing which he himself expresses by a different word in the following, or, rather, in the same sentence. "Sin was *in the world*," is manifestly a return upon "Sin entered *into the world*," and the world is primarily the world of men. The order of ideas, therefore, must be, "Sin came among men," "All [men] sinned," "Sin was among men;" and since the last is indisputably personal, how can the others be anything else? How could it possibly be said, that "through one man sin entered into the world [of men]," if "all [the world of men] sinned" the primal sin?—at least, how could it require to be added that "sin was in the world [of men]"—meaning, thereby, the personal sin of individuals? If the primal sin was committed by all men, then sin must not only have entered the



world, but completely pervaded it, as soon as the primal sin was committed; that is to say, sin—meaning the primal sin—must have been “in the world [of all men]” the moment that Adam fell. But how extravagant is it to suppose that within the compass of a single verse we have mention of two distinct ways in which sin entered, pervaded, and was in the world! It is a fact that death, having entered the world through Adam, has pervaded it, not instantaneously, or in the mass, but gradually, passing from individual to individual. And death is represented as entering and pervading the world *through sin*. Is it not, therefore, a fair inference that sin, having entered the world through Adam, pervaded it, not instantaneously, or in the mass, but gradually, passing from individual to individual? Besides all which, it has to be borne in mind that, if the death of all men be ascribed to the immediate imputation of Adam’s first sin *apart from and independent of any sin of their own*, the argument of chapters i.-iii. will be completely stultified, being rendered wholly superfluous. If all men are liable to condemnation and death on the ground that they sinned Adam’s transgression, in the sense that that transgression is imputed to them, or in any other sense, there is surely little need to go about proving that they are all liable to condemnation and death, on the ground that they have committed personal sin.\*

I take it, therefore, to be quite clear that when the apostle affirms that “death pervaded all men, *for that all sinned*,” the word “sinned” refers to the personal sin of all men, and this proves, positively, that the death of all men is due

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\* Stress is sometimes laid on the fact that the aorist tense (*ἤμαρτον*) is used, as if this implied that the sin referred to was a single definite past act; but the aorist *ἤμαρτον* is employed, and necessarily had to be employed, as a correlate to the aorist *διήλθεν* immediately preceding, and the former no more implies that the sin referred to is the imputed sin of Adam, than the latter implies that the death referred to is the imputed death of Adam. Men who urge this argument do not observe that the apostle *could not* have used *any other tense* than that which he has used, without modifying the whole structure, not only of the present sentence, but of the entire paragraph, the aorist tense being used throughout in the opening members of the antithetical sentences. It is only what might be expected, therefore, if a glance backward at the identical expression in iii. 23 should satisfy any impartial person, not only that the present argument is wholly fallacious, but, in addition, that the interpretation above given is correct.

directly and immediately to their own personal sin, negatively, that the death of all men cannot be due directly and immediately to the imputed transgression of Adam. It follows that the argument of vv. 13 and 14 must be directed to furnishing the *rationale* of the "so" (οὕτως)—to proving that the death of all men, though it is due directly and immediately to their own personal sin, may still be ascribed to the transgression of Adam, since it would not have taken place but for that transgression. This is done by adducing an instance which proves that the transgression of Adam must have conferred *imputableness* on sin that otherwise would not have been imputed. The word "sin" in v. 13 takes up "sinned" in the end of v. 12, and the argument is quite consecutive. In all cases death must be due to the imputation of sin. Some men between Adam and Moses died whose sin was not in itself imputable. Therefore the sin of some men between Adam and Moses must have been rendered imputable by the transgression of Adam. From this the apostle infers, not only that the transgression of Adam caused the death of some men between Adam and Moses, and that it causes the death of others similarly circumstanced,—which is all that the argument will fairly bear,—but that it is the cause of the death of *all* men. The conclusion is not expressly drawn out, but it is made use of throughout the paragraph.

The reader will perceive that the argument is somewhat finely spun. Paul does not say that the transgression of Adam is *imputed* to his posterity, for that would have appeared to contradict the principle that "sin is not imputed while there is no law;" yet the idea is exactly that of *mediate imputation*. Adam's descendants do not suffer the consequence of his sin directly, but they suffer it through the medium of their own personal sin; that is to say, Adam's sin is imputed to his descendants through the medium of their own personal sin.

Upon the most lenient consideration the argument cannot be regarded as particularly convincing. One great difficulty attending it is that the conclusion which the apostle wishes his readers to draw appears to involve something much more repugnant to reason and the moral sense than would be the negation of the principle or premise from which that con-

clusion is deduced. And this would be still more manifestly the case were the view of theologians correct that the apostle teaches the *immediate* instead of the mediate imputation to all men of Adam's transgression. The principle which lies at the basis of the apostle's argument is that "sin is not imputed while there is no law," and this is avowedly not a scriptural principle, but a principle of reason or common sense, a principle that commends itself as true to the common consciousness of mankind. Now, granting for the moment that it may appear unreasonable to punish sin where the law has not been expressly revealed, it is surely much more unreasonable to punish it where it has not even been committed. If Adam and his descendants be different persons, as they indisputably are, then Adam's sin was his alone, and not theirs at all. The posterity of Adam could have no consciousness of anything, least of all could they have consciousness of the law, or of a command similar to the law, at the time when the first transgression was committed. Whether, therefore, we regard Adam's sin as imputed to his descendants immediately or only mediately, in either case the imputation appears utterly and almost equally unreasonable—at least if the apostle's own principle be taken as the standard of reason.

But, it will be said, does not the apostle's conclusion follow inevitably from his premises? Grant that sin is not imputed while there is no law, and grant that some men between Adam and Moses sinned neither against the law nor against an express command, does it not follow that the death of some men between Adam and Moses was somehow caused by the first transgression of Adam? No; not in the very least. The only conclusion which these premises will warrant is a negative one, as every tyro in logic could tell. We may simply infer that the death of some men between Adam and Moses was *not* caused by their own sin *imputed in the ordinary way*—a conclusion as different from that of the apostle as the world is wide. It would be possible to suggest many reasons why God should have inflicted universal death on the pre-Mosaic world without having recourse to anything so far-fetched and repugnant to fundamental moral principle as the imputation mediate or immediate of the first transgression of Adam. One reason

lies very near at hand. It is commonly held—and the apostle to some extent shares the conviction—that man has a certain natural knowledge of moral duty quite independent of the law given by Moses. It would be too much, indeed, to say that Paul, or any other Scripture writer, distinguishes two laws, the natural and the revealed, the law written on the heart, that is, “conscience,” and the law delivered through Moses and developed by later writers. This distinction is a modern, not a Scriptural one. When the Apostle Paul uses the word law literally to describe a rule of moral conduct, he invariably refers to the revealed will of God contained in the Old Testament Scriptures, especially the Pentateuch, written or supposed to be written by Moses. He knows of no other rule of conduct which may be properly called a law, as comes out plainly in the verses we are now considering, and elsewhere. When the word law is applied to anything else, such as to faith (Rom. iii. 27), to the principle of sin (vii. 23), and of spiritual life (viii. 2), to the nature or heart of morally upright Gentiles (ii. 14, 15), the apostle is merely playing with it; he is using it, not because it is the word properly suited to express his thought, but because it happens to be already in his mouth, and because his ideas prefer to run on in the mould with which they started, instead of shaping themselves into more exact but different language. To have the law written on the heart does not mean to be furnished with a rule of moral conduct in the shape of a perfect intuitive knowledge of right and wrong: the apostle expressly says that the Gentiles have no such rule (ii. 12-14). On the contrary, it means to have the heart brought into that state of moral purity and uprightness in which it corresponds to the import of the revealed will of God, a state which God promises shall be the ultimate state of all His people in the final glory (Heb. viii. 10), and to which some, but only some, Gentiles attain “by nature,” that is, of their own accord (Rom. ii. 14). Naturally enough, when this has been done—I mean when the law has been written on the heart—a state of moral consciousness is created that condemns wrong, on the one hand, and approves of right, on the other (ii. 15); just as the renewed heart of the believer approves and delights in the law of God, while condemning



and warring against sin (vii. 22, 23). It is in the nature of a good disposition to shrink from evil on the one hand, and lean or be drawn to good on the other. But there is no evidence that Paul thought of all Gentiles without exception as possessing a "conscience" in the Butlerian sense, an adequate or tolerably adequate guide to moral conduct, which is spoken of as the law natural and internal, and contradistinguished from the law of Moses as the law revealed and external. The very opposite is everywhere manifest, for Paul himself "had not known sin except through the law," he "had not known lust except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet" (vii. 7).

Still, the apostle does attribute to the Gentiles a certain, if a small, amount of knowledge of moral duty, and an amount quite sufficient to incur the penalty of death, as the following passages plainly indicate: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who restrain the truth through unrighteousness; because that which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God manifested it unto them. For the invisible things of Him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood through the things that are made, even His everlasting power and Divinity; that they may be without excuse, because that, knowing God, they glorified Him not as God, neither gave thanks, but became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless heart was darkened," &c. . . . And we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against them that practise such things. And reckonest thou this, O man, that judgest them who practise such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? or despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? but after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up for thyself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his works. . . . For there is no respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law, and as many as have sinned under the

law shall be judged by the law ; for not the hearers of the law are righteous before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified . . . in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my Gospel" (i. 18-21 ; ii. 2-6, 11-13, 16). There is not a trace in these verses of the idea that the sins of men who are "without the law" (*ἀνόμους*) are imputable only through Adam's transgression ; still less, of course, of the idea that they are not imputable at all, but only Adam's transgression. The latter idea, in the face of quotations like the above, is evidently out of the question. The whole tenor of the apostle's language, and even his express statements, not only do not presuppose, but appear absolutely to exclude mediate as well as immediate imputation. The knowledge of God which the Gentiles possessed rendered them inexcusable, and *therefore* the wrath of God was revealed against them. Why, then, should not the apostle have attributed the death of men between Adam and Moses to their natural knowledge of moral duty, instead of tracing it to Adam's transgression ? Surely this would have harmonised much better with the indications of Old Testament history ; for how extravagant is it to suppose that the Sodomites, or any one else in the period to which the apostle refers, had their sins imputed to them only through the medium of Adam's transgression ! Does not the apostle's own language, as quoted above, equally with the history itself, directly refute such an idea ?

Another difficulty attending the apostle's argument is that it is only partial, it does not cover all the cases that call for solution. If the effect of Adam's transgression is merely to impart *imputableness* to actual sin which otherwise would have been unimputable, then Adam's transgression can have no effect whatever on infants, who have never committed actual sin ; death cannot possibly pervade all such infants "*for that all sinned.*" Yet, as a matter of fact, death does pervade all such infants, and the apostle's theory leaves their death entirely unaccounted for. The difficulty cannot be got rid of by alleging that infants, though not actual sinners, are yet original sinners, and that the sin of Adam is imputed to them through the medium of their own original sin. For there is

no evidence that the apostle either held or intended to teach the doctrine of original sin, meaning by that the doctrine that Adam's first transgression corrupted human nature as such, and that this corrupted nature is inherited by each and all of Adam's descendants. If Paul held such a doctrine, why does he not make use of it for the purpose of tracing the death of all men to Adam, in like manner as the eternal life of all men can be traced to Christ? Instead of appealing to the death of adults, between Adam and Moses, that did not consciously sin, like Adam, why does he not appeal to the death of infants, that did not consciously sin at all, in proof of the fact that the sin, and therefore also the death, of all men is caused by Adam's first transgression? The apostle's own argument only applies to some men between Adam and Moses, and to others similarly circumstanced; but this argument would really have applied to *all* men: why then does he not use this argument instead of his own, which is otherwise so far-fetched, unreasonable, and inconclusive? On the other hand, if it be alleged that the apostle teaches the immediate and not the mediate imputation of Adam's transgression, and that this covers the case of infants and heathens as well as of men between Adam and Moses, we are landed in a more serious difficulty still. For now the apostle's argument will imply that the sins of men who are "without law" (*ἀνόμους*)—the sins of heathens generally, and of men between Adam and Moses that did not transgress express commands—are unimputable and unimputed, that all such men die simply and solely on account of Adam's transgression, and not at all on account of their own sins, however aggravated those sins may be. And this is absolutely opposed not only to Scripture, history, and experience, but also and especially to the quotations adduced above. If these quotations mean anything, they mean that the sins of all men, Jew and Gentile alike, are imputed, whether committed under law or not. Possibly it will be urged that the death of infants may be accounted for on the principle of the Divine sovereignty, which determines so many other things about them (ix. 10-13). But then the principle of the Divine sovereignty is a very broad principle that will account for almost anything. If the Divine sovereignty account for the death of infants, much

more will it account for the death of actual sinners between Adam and Moses,—in which case the foundation of the apostle's argument is taken away. The sovereignty of God is like the moral knowledge of the heathen—it will account for all the facts without the help of the transgression of Adam, and there is no longer any need of that transgression or of anything else to account for them; that is, there is no longer any room for the apostle's argument.

A further difficulty attending the apostle's argument has been already alluded to. The scope of the parallel requires that the transgression of Adam should be, if not the sole or the immediate cause, at least an essential condition, of the death of *every* man, in like manner as the grace or righteousness of Christ is an essential condition of the life of every believer. In v. 15 the statement is, “If *by the trespass of the one the many died*, much more is it that the grace of God and the gift in the grace of the one man Jesus Christ hath abounded unto the many.” Again in v. 18 we read, “So then, as *through the trespass of one the judgment pervaded all men unto condemnation*, so also through the righteousness of One the acquittal shall pervade all men unto justification of life.” These statements clearly imply that the trespass of Adam is the cause of the death of *all* men in as real and valid a sense as the grace or righteousness of Christ is the cause of the life of all believers. But the argument of vv. 13 and 14, so far from implying the like, would rather seem to imply the opposite. For in these verses it is taken for granted that all who receive the Mosaic law and sin against it are liable to condemnation and death on that account; their sins are of themselves imputable; and it is scarcely conceivable that the trespass of Adam should be mediately imputed under these circumstances, since that would imply that imputableness had to be conferred from without on sins which were of themselves imputable. But if the trespass of Adam be not mediately imputed, it can have nothing whatever to do with the death of men who receive the Mosaic law. And this means that the apostle's argument to be valid must be limited in its application to men who do not receive the Mosaic law. Even were the sin of Adam not mediately but *immediately* imputed, the



case would hardly be different. For on the showing of the apostle himself the death of men who receive the Mosaic law would take place precisely as it does whether Adam's sin were imputed or no (vv. 20, 21), and therefore the sin of Adam could not be the cause of the death of all men in the sense that the grace or righteousness of Christ is the cause of the life of all believers. At the best, the sin of Adam could only be a purely unessential condition, not worth mentioning, as it is certainly never mentioned, when the death of sinners is spoken of; whereas the grace or righteousness of Christ is the alone cause or condition of life eternal to all them that obey Him, and is constantly represented in that light. It is fair to add that the apostle himself appears to recognise the failure, or at least the limitation, of the parallel as based on the argument of vv. 13, 14, and hence, as we shall see, he gives it a different turn, placing it on a much broader and safer basis, in vv. 20, 21.

Lastly, there is the difficulty arising from the fact that the mediate imputation of Adam's transgression can have nothing corresponding to it on the other side of the parallel. The apostle himself teaches that the imputableness or rewardableness of righteousness is entirely unaffected by the presence or absence of the law (ii. 13-16, 26-29). Heathens who have never so much as heard of the law will, if they are found righteous, be regarded and treated as such by God. So paramount and universal in its application is the principle of the worthiness of moral goodness wherever found, that the apostle would appear to set it above even faith itself in the specifically Christian sense. Faith in Christ is the ordinary means whereby moral goodness is created and the law fulfilled; but if men fulfil the law by nature apart from faith in Christ, the result will be exactly the same—they will be justified and rewarded in the day of judgment (*id.*). It cannot, therefore, be the case that the grace or righteousness of Christ is needed to render imputable the righteous acts of men, whether these are done by nature or by faith in Christ. Some such idea is no doubt entertained by theologians, when they allege that the good works of believers, though imperfect and unworthy in themselves, are accepted and rewarded on account of the work

of Christ. This is, as nearly as possible, the mediate imputation of the righteous acts of Christ, which, in the absence of any such thing as immediate imputation, would correspond tolerably well with the mediate imputation of the sinful act of Adam. Unhappily, however, this idea, unlike the other, is destitute of even the semblance of Scripture evidence, and can only be set down as a fiction of the imagination pure and simple. Not the imputation of Christ's righteousness, but the condemnation and consequent destruction of the sin in Christ's flesh, was needed "in order that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit" (viii. 4). Least of all is it necessary that the righteous acts of believers should be performed in obedience to the letter of the law in order that they may be imputable: rather, the apostle's contention everywhere is that the believer's obedience exists mainly because it is rendered apart from the letter of the law. The principle of Christian obedience is not the law but the grace of God that worketh in us to will and to do for His good pleasure (Phil. ii. 13). The obedience which is of the law is mere bond service, extorted by a dead letter, outward, partial, ineffectual; the obedience of faith is the spontaneous outcome of the Divine Spirit operating mightily in the soul. It is therefore quite impossible that a distinction should exist among righteous acts, such as the apostle alleges to exist among sinful acts, between those done in connection with and those done apart from the law; consequently, it is quite impossible that any such thing as mediate imputation should exist in the case of Christ's righteousness corresponding to the mediate imputation which is alleged to exist in the case of Adam's sin. It follows that the apostle's parallel, so far as it rests on the mediate imputation of Adam's sin, cannot hold with strict exactness. When, for example, it is said, "As through the disobedience of the one the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the One the many shall be made righteous," this must be taken in a somewhat modified sense, for the method of constituting the many sinners through the one sin of Adam cannot be the same as the method of constituting the many righteous through the much grace or righteousness of Christ.

The many are constituted righteous by "receiving the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness," by permitting grace to "reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord"—in other words, by dying to sin and rising again to righteousness in the power of the Divine grace or Spirit. The many must, in accordance with what precedes, be constituted sinners by having Adam's sin imputed to them through the medium of their own personal sins; in no other way could the condemnation and death of all be truly attributed to the sin of the one, since there is no attempt at connecting the sins of men *genetically* with the first transgression of Adam.

Possibly, it may be thought that the parallelism would be restored by postulating the immediate imputation, alike of Christ's righteousness and of Adam's sin, and that a presumption is thus raised in favour of immediate and against mediate imputation. But, in addition to reasons already adduced, observe—(1.) that "the gift" of righteousness is distinctly stated to be received "*in the grace* of the One Man Jesus Christ," and if the gift be received by imputation the grace must be so also. It is certain, however, that believers receive the grace of God, even as the Apostle Paul himself received it (Rom. i. 5; 1 Cor. xv. 10; 2 Cor. xii. 9; Gal. i. 15; ii. 9; Eph. iii. 7, 8, &c.), not by imputation, but as a renewing, redeeming, transforming power, a power working within, and producing death to sin, on the one hand, resurrection to righteousness, on the other—therein effecting complete salvation as the condition of life eternal (1 Cor. i. 4-9; Eph. ii. 4-10; Tit. ii. 11-14; iii. 4-7; John i. 16, &c.). (2.) There is no doubt whatever that in the present paragraph the possession of grace, and of the righteousness which grace confers, is represented as covering the whole of human salvation or restoration, as being the sole condition of inheriting and enjoying life eternal—just as truly so as the possession of sin is the sole cause of human ruin, or the sole condition of incurring the penalty of death (v. 21). Now, since it is certain that before a man can see the kingdom of God, and enjoy life eternal, he must have been regenerated and renewed, the inference is inevitable, that the righteousness which grace

confers must be the outcome of regeneration, renewal, or sanctification. Mere imputation of Christ's righteousness could not be put forward as the condition of "reigning in life," when that experience is possible only to the man who has been raised from death in trespasses and sins to fellowship of life with Christ in God. (3.) The point of the contrast in vv. 16, 17, and of the parallel in vv. 20, 21—each of these separately and both combined—prove decisively that the case as regards Adam's transgression, whether it be one of mediate or immediate imputation, is *not* strictly parallel to the case as regards Christ's righteousness.

As already observed, the parallel-contrast presented in vv. 12-19, if it is to be valid, must be limited so as to lie between the method of ruin *in the case of men who do not receive the Mosaic law*, and the method of restoration in the case of men who receive the grace of God. In vv. 20, 21, on the other hand, the parallel (the contrast vanishes almost entirely) is shifted so as to lie between the method of ruin *in the case of men who receive the Mosaic law*, and the method of restoration in the case of men who receive the grace of God. The apostle's words are: "And the law invaded [the world] beside [sin], in order that the trespass might abound; but where sin abounded grace did superabound; in order that as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness unto eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." The meaning of these verses is illustrated by vv. 13, 14, as well as by various other passages in the apostle's writings. The transgression was multiplied, or made to abound, by the introduction of the law, because "through the law cometh the knowledge of sin" (iii. 20), because "the law worketh wrath, but where no law is there is no transgression" (iv. 15), because "sin is not imputed while there is no law" (v. 13), because the law "was added in favour of transgressions" (Gal. iii. 19)—the law being "the power of sin" (1 Cor. xv. 56) in the sense that it confers upon sin the power to work wrath, or to inflict the penalty of death. "Apart from the law sin is dead" (Rom. vii. 8)—dead subjectively, in that the sinner is unconscious of its true character—perhaps also in that it does not so fully develop itself and exercise its power—and dead objectively, in that it



has no power to "slay" the sinner (vv. 7-11). Previous to the introduction of the law, the sins of men were as if they had no existence. One sin, and one only, possessed the character of a real living transgression, having power to inflict death, viz., "the trespass [of Adam]." Whatever condemning power other sins had was due to this one. *After* the introduction of the law, *every* sin was a real transgression, powerful, living, death-bringing. So that "the trespass" was multiplied, or made to abound, exceedingly. Henceforth sin "reigned" as a living power, through the law, over against the reigning power of grace or righteousness, the former manifesting itself in death, the latter in life.

Thus there arises an entirely new parallel, differing from the other in several essential particulars. To make the parallel more exact, v. 21 might be read, "As sin reigned through the law in death, so also righteousness shall reign through grace in life, unto eternity, through Jesus Christ our Lord." The antithesis between "the law" and "grace," which appears in this verse, is the most fundamental in the Apostle Paul's writings. By "the law" is meant the letter of the law, considered as completely divorced from the Spirit of God, and as a means of condemnation, but not a means of salvation, being, in this view of it, a synonym for the dead naturalistic Judaism of the Apostolic age. By "grace" is meant the Spirit of God or of Christ, considered as completely divorced from the letter of the law, and as a means of salvation, but not a means of condemnation, being, in this view of it, a synonym for the living spiritual Christianity of the Apostolic age. This circumstance alone, which is absolutely above dispute, is enough to settle the nature of the righteousness of which the apostle speaks, since it utterly explodes the notion that what he has in view is the Reformation antithesis between justification and sanctification, as between the instantaneous forgiveness of past sins, together with the imputation of Christ's righteousness, and the lifelong process of renewal by the Spirit of God. The latter antithesis belongs exclusively to the era of the Reformation, in which, despite its gross inaccuracy, it performed real and lasting service, by breaking through the dead, mechanical, naturalistic, ritualistic religion

of the Church of Rome; not at all to the era of Christ and His apostles, to which it is altogether foreign, having no bearing whatever on the controversies that then occupied men's minds and divided their opinions. Further, it is not here asserted that the death of all men is "through one man," in like manner as the life of all believers is "through Jesus Christ our Lord." Nor does the writer insist on the contrast between the amount of sin on the one side as compared with the amount of righteousness on the other; for it is no longer "the [single] trespass" as opposed to "the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness," but abundance of sin on the one side, abundance or superabundance of grace and righteousness on the other. According to the present form of the parallel, every man's death is caused simply by his own sin, and that sin is not small, but great in amount. Death pervades the world not through one man but through all men, and not through one sin but through all sin. There is a reign of sin as such in death, just as there is a reign of righteousness as such in life. And so, what the apostle's parallel loses on one side, it gains on another. If it can no longer be said that the sinfulness and death of all men come through a single individual in like manner as the righteousness and life of all men come through a single individual, it can at least be said that the death of every man comes through his being possessed and ruled over by sin in like manner as the life of every man comes through his being possessed and ruled over by righteousness. There is not a word here about imputation either on one hand or the other. And there is no room for such a thing. The sin of which the apostle speaks is the personal sin of each individual, committed in direct violation of the law, and such sin "reigns in death" apart from the transgression of Adam, or anything else. The righteousness of which he speaks is likewise the personal righteousness of each individual, created by the power of grace (*i.e.*, of the Spirit of Christ), and such righteousness constitutes the passport to "reigning in life" without the help of so-called imputed righteousness. To introduce the idea of imputation, whether mediate or immediate, is not only not required by the parallelism, but it would utterly destroy the parallelism as well as the meaning.

Now all this inevitably suggests the reflection that the principle enunciated in vv. 13, 14, and the argument founded upon it, have simply been manufactured for the purpose of driving a foregone conclusion. The mere fact that the conclusion does not follow from the premises—that, on the contrary, it involves something much more repugnant to reason than the negation of the major premise would be—is enough to prove that the real foundation of the apostle's parallel lies somewhere else than in the argument which he makes use of to support it. Nor is it difficult to discover what the real foundation is, and how the whole paragraph has arisen. The key is found in the concluding clause of v. 14, where the apostle, speaking of Adam, uses the words, "Who is a *type* (τύπος) of the Coming One." These words plainly indicate that Adam and the future Messianic Deliverer are thought of as corresponding to each other as type and antitype. The same idea likewise underlies 1 Cor. xv. 45, *seq.* This is a Rabbinical idea, which the apostle found ready to hand, and of which he makes use to illustrate his scheme of salvation and commend it to readers imbued with the current Jewish theology. That Adam in introducing sin and death was the type of whom Messiah would be the antitype in putting sin and death away, that as there had been a first Adam, so there would be a last Adam, was the express teaching of the Jewish schools in the time of Paul. And it should not in the least surprise us that, when the apostle adopts this idea in order to turn it to account for the ends of popular persuasion, he should at the same time adopt some of the arguments by which it was supported, or manufacture others of a like nature by which it might be supported. We have already seen that in 1 Cor. xv. 45 he uses an expanded, unhistorical text of Gen. ii. 7, reads into the word "soul" a pregnant, unhistorical meaning, and then infers that the last Adam, whose existence and antitypical character he takes for granted, will be of a nature fitting Him to be the antitype of the first. The argument of that passage, though it has the effect of overthrowing the common doctrine of the fall, is adopted simply because it supports the parallel between Adam as type and Christ as antitype. So, in the passage before us, the typical

idea is the *final cause* of the whole paragraph, and everything is constructed so as to converge upon it. The form in which the parallel is presented conveys the impression that the method of restoration through Christ is being deduced from the method of ruin through Adam, and that the latter is to be taken as the standard by which to measure and ascertain the former; but in reality the very reverse is the case. The apostle *knows* the method of salvation or restoration from his experience as a believer in Christ; he knows from his Rabbinical training that Christ and his work of restoration are regarded as typified in Adam and his work of ruin; and he endeavours to bring these two things together by showing, on Scriptural and reasonable grounds, how Adam and his work of ruin may be co-ordinated with Christ and His work of restoration. Casting about for the means of connecting the death of all men directly with Adam in like manner as the life of all believers is derived directly from Christ, he falls upon this principle, that "sin is not imputed while there is no law," and proceeds to construct an argument upon it. Men between Adam and Moses died: men between Adam and Moses had not received the law of Moses: therefore the death of men between Adam and Moses may be ascribed to the original transgression of Adam. No matter that the fundamental principle is itself open to doubt, especially in view of the death of infants; no matter that the conclusion does not follow from the premises; no matter that the imputation, whether mediate or immediate, of Adam's transgression is an idea not only difficult of conception and destitute of analogy in the case of Christ, but far more unreasonable than would be the negation of the fundamental principle,—amounting, as it does, to something more than the negation of that principle; no matter that the mediate imputation of Adam's transgression does not touch the case of men who receive the Mosaic law, nor the case of infants who never actually sinned; no matter that the death of men between Adam and Moses is sufficiently accounted for by the natural knowledge of God and of moral duty which they possessed; no matter that, if it were otherwise, the sovereignty of God or the ultimate nature of things, which must in any case account for the origin of evil, would account



for such consequences of evil as the suffering and death of heathens, infants, &c.; no matter that to ascribe the death of men between Adam and Moses to mere or even to mediate imputation of Adam's transgression would be to set at nought the testimony of Scripture, of history, of analogy, and likewise of common sense; no matter that after all, after imputation, mediate or immediate, has been adopted and admitted, with all its subtlety and strange consequences, the method of ruin through Adam has only the most shadowy possible resemblance to the method of restoration through Christ, faith and the work of the Holy Spirit, which are so essential on the one side, being entirely unrepresented on the other; no matter that the law itself may not have been delivered at the time to which tradition assigns it, but developed gradually in the course of centuries, and always from elements of moral knowledge previously existing, in which case the foundation of the whole argument, and therewith of the whole parallel, will be very rudely shaken, if not entirely broken up; no matter, I say,—what the apostle has got to do, and what he does do, is not to establish the truth of the common opinion that Adam was, properly speaking, a type of Messiah, but, granting that opinion, to confirm it by the usual popular methods of argument, and then to illustrate and commend his scheme of salvation by means of it. The entire paragraph takes its rise from, and rests upon, two presuppositions: the one the fact of salvation, restoration, or the attainment of righteousness and life through Christ—a fact derived from independent, that is, from experimental sources; the other the idea of a typical relationship between Adam and Christ—an idea likewise derived from independent, that is, from Rabbinical sources. Given these two presuppositions, the problem which the apostle has to solve is to demonstrate the typical relationship, by showing wherein the case as regards Adam and his descendants corresponds to the case as regards Christ and believers. The apostle's direct aim is not to communicate the method of human salvation through Christ—that having been already done in the previous portion of the epistle—but rather to illustrate and commend it to his readers by showing how it tallies with its presumed type, the method of human ruin

through Adam. Just as the aim of the Epistle to the Hebrews is not to explain in a direct, simple, didactic manner the nature of the Gospel scheme of salvation, but to show how that scheme, being what it is known and acknowledged to be, corresponds to its presumed type, the law scheme of salvation, so the aim of the present paragraph is not to propound after a plain unrhetorical fashion the method of restoration through Christ, but to show how that method, being what it is known and acknowledged to be, corresponds to its presumed type, the method of ruin through Adam. When this is borne in mind, the artificial character of the argument, and its inconsistency with the apostle's teaching elsewhere, are at once explained. The writer to the Hebrews is determined at all hazards to make out a resemblance between two things that have little or no intrinsic resemblance,—that neither are fitted nor were ever intended to represent each other as type and antitype,—the Old Testament dispensation of law or ceremony and the New Testament dispensation of Gospel grace; and hence, as we shall see, he falls into a multitude of contradictions and inconsistencies at once with himself and with historical fact. And in the same way the Apostle Paul is determined at all hazards to make out a resemblance between the method of ruin through Adam and the method of restoration through Christ—things which, after all, have not very much intrinsic resemblance, and which were certainly never intended to represent each other as type and antitype; and hence the strained, artificial, inconsistent, inconclusive character of the reasoning he employs.

I have argued in favour of mediate imputation, because that idea, subtle and hair-splitting though it may appear, is demanded by strict grammatical and lexicographical principle, not because it is less unreasonable in itself than immediate imputation, or less opposed to the available evidence. It would be no very serious objection to the immediate imputation of Adam's transgression that it is repugnant to the dictates of reason, to the teachings of experience and analogy, to the indications of Old Testament history, to other statements in the apostle's writings: in spite of all that, it might still be taught in the present passage, with a view to making

out the parallel between Adam as type, and Christ as anti-type. The real objection to it is, that it will not explain the apostle's language without forsaking the grammar and lexicon, and drawing on the fancies of the Church doctors. Still, even if we suppose that the thing taught is the immediate imputation of Adam's transgression—a possibility which I have oftener than once contemplated above, because absolute assurance as to the meaning of a passage so artificial in its conception, and so abruptly expressed, is hardly attainable—this will by no means warrant the inference that the immediate imputation of Christ's righteousness is likewise taught, as the reader will easily perceive.

Nothing could possibly be more fallacious than the common impression, that when we have settled the precise nature of the process on one side of the parallel, we may infer with absolute certainty as to the precise nature of the process on the other side. This is the same fallacy which we meet in connection with the Epistle to the Hebrews, when men suppose that by proving what is the precise nature of a Jewish sacrifice, they have proved what is the precise nature of the saving work of Christ. In both cases the writers are throwing the features of a supposed antitype back into what was never intended for a type, and such an undertaking can from its very nature be but very partially successful. The Apostle Paul, no doubt, strives hard to find something on the side of Adam corresponding to what is known to exist on the side of Christ, just as the author of Hebrews strives hard to find something in the work of Christ corresponding to the several parts of the Jewish sacrifice; but no man, not even an inspired man, can accomplish impossibilities. If the two things were totally, or partially, different before the attempt to co-ordinate them began, they will be totally, or partially, different after it is finished; only, the difference will be veiled under a sameness of phraseology sanctioned by dubious exegetical and other arguments. When, for example, it is said in v. 18 that "as through the disobedience of the one the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the One the many shall be made righteous," the phraseology on both sides is exactly the same, but the facts must in the nature of the case

be different. No one dare pretend that the two things happen in exactly the same way : unless we have greatly misunderstood the argument of the previous verses, they happen, according to the apostle himself, in very different ways. If it be said that by taking the first member of the parallel in a different sense from the second, we are playing fast and loose with the apostle's language, the answer is that the apostle himself compels us to do so. If the imputation, mediate or immediate, of Adam's transgression be taught in v. 19, the same cannot possibly be taught in v. 21 ; yet in v. 21, not less than in v. 19, the method of restoration is represented as parallel to the method of ruin. It is not, therefore, a question of whether the apostle's language is ever to be taken loosely, but in which of two cases it is to be taken loosely, or whether it is to be taken loosely in both.

These observations may serve to evince how thoroughly delusive are some of the modes of reasoning employed in the interpretation of this and similar passages. When theologians have it pointed out to them that the imputation of Adam's transgression, as they understand it, cannot, without great violence, be read into vv. 12-14, or, indeed, into any part of the paragraph, the answer not unfrequently is that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to believers, and that, consequently, violence or no violence, the sin of Adam *must* likewise be imputed. But even if it were a fact, which it is not, that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to believers, it would by no means follow that the sin of Adam *must* likewise be imputed. The apostle's aim is to make out a parallel, so far as that is possible, between Adam as type and Christ as antitype. He professes to have so far succeeded as to show that whereas the life of all believers is causally connected with the obedience or righteousness of Christ, the death of all men is causally connected with the disobedience or sin of Adam. But even his language cannot fairly be held to imply that the disobedience of Adam brings about the death of all men *in exactly the same way* that the obedience of Christ brings about the life of all believers. On the contrary, both the nature of the case, and the peculiar character of the argument by which the apostle connects the sin of Adam with the death



of all men—not to speak of the qualifications expressly introduced in the middle of the paragraph (vv. 16, 17)—indicate quite clearly that the details of the *modus* must be different in the two cases. Something in the nature of imputation is the means whereby the sin of Adam affects all men so as to bring about their death, but there is not a word nor a hint in vv. 12-19 that anything in the nature of imputation is the means whereby the righteousness of Christ affects all believers so as to bring about their life; whilst v. 21 is utterly opposed to any such idea.

Again, it is very commonly maintained that v. 18 expressly teaches the doctrine of universal salvation, or at least of a universal “atonement,” including by implication the universal salvation of infants. I have certainly no particular desire to defend the doctrine of a limited atonement, nor even of an atonement at all, in the popular sense of the word; but without committing one’s self to any such thing one may be allowed to point out that neither universal salvation nor universal atonement can find any substantial support from the balanced expressions of the present paragraph. In v. 18 we read that “through the trespass of one the judgment pervaded *all men* unto condemnation”; but it has been already shown that this is merely a rough, general, approximate statement, made for the purpose of rounding the antithesis, that the apostle’s argument in the preceding verses by no means warrants so sweeping a conclusion, that it is implied in the reasoning of vv. 13, 14, and expressly asserted in vv. 20, 21, that the condemnation and death of men who receive the Mosaic law do not proceed from the transgression of Adam, but from their own personal transgressions, in the same way that the justification and life of believers proceed not from the imputation of Christ’s obedience but from their own personal obedience, as prompted and called into exercise by Divine grace. And if the first member of v. 18 be merely a rough, general, approximate statement, adapted to bring out the parallelism, the second member very well may be, and in fact evidently is, a statement framed on the same model, and of precisely the same character. “So also through the righteous doing of One the acquittal shall pervade *all men* unto justification of life,”

has nothing whatever to do with an "atonement;" to which there is nothing in the least corresponding on the other side of the parallel. It certainly has to do with salvation, but the statement, being general, and having no pretence to exhaustive completeness, ignores entirely the existence of faith as the means of appropriating the Divine grace and righteousness, the essential condition of justification and life, obviously because there is no such thing as faith connected with the incurring of condemnation and death through Adam's sin in the other member of the parallel. It thus completely disguises the fact that the way in which the righteous doing of Christ causes the life of men is entirely different from the way in which (as is alleged) the sin of Adam causes the death of men, that in the one case the effect is produced invariably, being practically independent of the will of the person affected, whereas in the other case the effect is produced conditionally, and therefore variably, being wholly dependent on the will of the person affected. From this it naturally and necessarily follows that the apostle says "*all men*" when the nature of the case demands that he should mean "*all believers*." The apostle could have said "*all believers*" only if he had explained that grace and righteousness were appropriated by faith, and that while some believed the word spoken others believed not—to have done which would have grievously marred and obscured the parallelism. Such being the case, it is manifestly preposterous to stand on the universal expression "*all men*" as a proof of a universal "atonement" or universal salvation.

Once more, it is often alleged that the doctrine of original sin is distinctly taught in this place, particularly at v. 12, and again at v. 19. But the most remarkable thing about the whole paragraph is that the doctrine of original sin is distinctly *not taught* in it. It is quite true that if v. 19 stood alone, and had no manner of connection either with what precedes or with what follows, nothing would be so natural as to construe the first member as teaching the doctrine of original sin. In that case, indeed, the sinfulness of men would not be *directly* derived from Adam in consequence of his disobedience in like manner as the righteousness of believers is directly derived from Christ (through His indwelling Spirit) in consequence of

His obedience. Still, it would be *ultimately* derived from Adam through the medium of an indefinite series of ancestors, and parallelism closer than this could not reasonably be either expected or required. V. 19, however, does not stand alone, but is intimately connected both with what precedes and with what follows, and therefore whatever be the meaning of the second member, or whatever the effect on the parallelism,—which, as we have abundantly proved, cannot in any case be perfectly exact,—we are bound to put on the first member a construction warranted by the context, and not one to which the context gives not the smallest countenance. When it is said in v. 12 that “sin invaded (εἰσῆλθεν) the world,” the word “sin” (ἡ ἁμαρτία) refers simply to the actual trespass of Adam, as v. 20 shows, where “invaded beside” (παρ—εἰσῆλθεν) indicates that a return is being made upon v. 12, and where “the trespass” (τὸ παράπτωμα), which indisputably refers to the sinful act of Adam (*cf.* “the trespass,” vv. 15, 17, 18; “Adam’s transgression,” v. 14; “the disobedience,” v. 19; one that “sinned,” v. 16), is alternated with “sin” (ἡ ἁμαρτία) in the same sentence. When it is said in the same v. 12 that “all sinned,” the word “sinned” (ἥμαρτον) again refers simply to conscious acts, which are actually though not always consciously sinful,—such acts as are spoken of in chapters i.-iii.,—as appears clearly from vv. 13, 14 (*cf.* “many trespasses,” v. 16). And so throughout the whole of vv. 12—20 the word sin has only one meaning, and that the simplest possible,—viz., sinful act, trespass, transgression (unconscious it may be) of the law. Such subtleties as “sin in the abstract,” “sin as a habit,” “sin as a principle,” “sin as a power,” “sin as to its idea and essence” serve no other purpose than to confuse and perplex the mind. The apostle gives us no information as to whether sin became habitual in Adam, much less does he indicate that an habitual proneness to sin was transmitted by Adam to all his descendants. Even if he had raised and discussed such points, he would never have said or thought what has been so often said and thought for him, that a single sin *totally* depraved the nature of Adam, and that depravity was an *arbitrary* judicial infliction on account of the first transgression. He knew too well that while sin enslaves the

man who commits it, it does so naturally, and only gradually ; that God inflicts depravity on men, not directly, but only by "giving them up" (Rom. i. 24, 26, 28) to the power of evil, so that they are thereby "fitted to destruction" (ix. 22). The further idea that Adam's transgression is imputed to each of his descendants before they come into existence, and that the guilt attaching to it causes them to come into existence under the arbitrary penal infliction of "total depravity," is a fantastic piece of absurdity, opposed not only to Scripture but to the most elementary laws of logic and common sense. Had the apostle meant to teach such a doctrine his appeal to the death of adults between Adam and Moses would be altogether meaningless and inept. What has the death of adults, who had personally sinned, indeed, *though not against law*, to do with the fact that all men receive at their birth a depraved constitution in consequence of the imputation to them before birth of Adam's transgression? Why should not the apostle have rather appealed to the case of infants who die before committing actual sin, a case that lay so near at hand, that required no unwarranted assumptions or artificial reasonings to support it, and that bore so much more directly than the case actually adduced on the point supposed to be at issue? The truth is that the apostle says not one word about depravity in Adam's descendants any more than in Adam himself. Nor does he say how all men come to commit actual sin. He does not connect the sin of all men with that of Adam by saying that because Adam sinned *therefore* all men *sin*. What he says is that because Adam sinned *therefore* (*οὕτως*) all men *died*, and this because as a matter of empirical fact (no matter how it came about) all personally sinned. This does not imply that the actual personal sins of men sprang from original sin derived from Adam. Far less does it imply that such original sin owed its existence to the imputation of Adam's transgression. It merely implies that the death of men is due to two causes—immediately to their own personal sin, mediately to the sin of Adam acting in and through that personal sin. When the apostle would "lay to the charge both of Jews and Gentiles that they are all under sin" (iii. 9), when he would prove that "all sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (v. 23), he is



so far from invoking the doctrine of original sin by natural descent from Adam, that by appealing to everything else—to history (i. 18-32), to experience (ii. *passim*), to Scripture (iii. 10-19), the last being dealt with very freely for the purpose of bringing out the desired conclusion—he appears tacitly to deny that such a course was open. How natural would have been an appeal to hereditary corruption in proof of universal human sinfulness and guilt! And, in proportion to the naturalness, how inexplicable that no such appeal is made!

There is, it must be admitted, a strong temptation to connect the actual sins of men with the transgression of Adam by means of some such doctrine as original sin, in consequence of the view of human sinfulness that begins to be stated in v. 21, and is developed throughout the three succeeding chapters. After the law has been fully revealed, sin assumes the character of a living, reigning power or principle, striving for mastery or dominion over the whole person, just as, on the other hand, righteousness, the fruit of grace, is a living, reigning power or principle, striving for mastery or dominion over the whole person (*id.*). In chapters vi.-viii. we find that this power or principle is represented as occupying “the flesh,” otherwise “the body” of sin, the “old” or “outward man,” while the principle or power of righteousness occupies “the spirit,” otherwise “the mind,” the “new” or “inward man”; that these two principles, in their separate spheres, are directly opposed to each other; that “the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, for these are contrary the one to the other” (Gal. v. 17); and that the object or tendency of sin, as well as of righteousness, is to reduce the entire person into slavery or subjection to itself. We find, also, that as the spirit is so essentially righteous that it cannot sin, that it “delights in the law of God,” so on the other hand the flesh is so essentially sinful that it cannot but sin—“it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be.” We find, in particular, that the flesh, the body, the outward man, is so indissolubly bound up with the principle of sin that the one can be destroyed or “brought to nought” only with the destruction of the other. Death is the means of destroying the body. It is also the means, and the

only means, of destroying or bringing to nought the principle of sin. Naturally, too, when the flesh is thought of as essentially characterised by sin, and the spirit as essentially characterised by righteousness, the two are represented as transmissible, each with its essential characteristic, in accordance with the statement of Jesus to Nicodemus, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John iii. 6). And, of course, as the flesh is naturally and necessarily subject to sin, so it is naturally and necessarily subject to death; and, in like manner, as the spirit is naturally and necessarily possessed of righteousness, so it is naturally and necessarily possessed of life; and therefore we read that "to be carnally minded is death—to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Rom. viii. 6). Now, when we find presented in Rom. v. 21 *seq.*, this view of sin as reigning in and inseparably associated with the flesh, the body, the outward man, and when we find at v. 12 the statement that "by one man sin invaded the world, and through sin death," what could be more natural than to combine the two, and to infer that with the first transgression the principle of sin entered and occupied the flesh, bringing in its train the principle of decay and death? Nevertheless, the inference must be regarded as exceedingly precarious, and that for a variety of reasons.

(1.) The whole drift of the apostle's language, especially throughout the section vii. 7-25, points to the conclusion that the distinction of flesh and spirit in their essential natures as the seat of sin and the seat of righteousness respectively, and in their mutual antagonism and conflict, is not a deduction from the doctrine of the fall, but the product of reflection on the writer's own experience *subsequent to his conversion or calling*.<sup>\*</sup> The principle of sin reigning in the flesh, and warring against the principle of righteousness reigning in the spirit, is an empirical fact which the apostle "saw," after the Spirit had been received, and its relation to the flesh as an opposing hostile power had been determined. The *genesis*

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\* Detailed reasons for this view of the passage will be found in chapter xii., where the meanings of the two terms "flesh" and "spirit" are likewise fully discussed.

of the present essential sinfulness of the flesh is no more investigated in these chapters than is the genesis of the present essential righteousness of the Spirit. All that appears is that the flesh, *as it now exists*, is so essentially sinful that sin and "the body" must be, and "be annihilated" (vi. 6) together; they are as inseparable as the Spirit is inseparable from righteousness; the flesh can no more be made righteous than the Divine nature can be made sinful.

(2.) The structure of the section v. 12-20 is such as to betray quite clearly that the apostle's ultimate aim is a practical one—viz., to commend the scheme of salvation just propounded by showing how it harmonises with the current popular notion that the future Messianic Deliverer would correspond to Adam as antitype corresponds to type. His immediate aim is to establish a correspondence between the two—Adam and Christ; and, in seeking to accomplish this, he avails himself of all such popular assumptions and arguments as happen to bear out his present point, no matter whether they do or do not conflict with the requirements of that system of thought which is properly his own. That he should do this cannot surprise us when a popular opinion lies at the foundation of the whole paragraph. The reasoning is special pleading, fitted to convince those and those only who accept the fundamental assumption, and the other assumptions that go along with it. If the popular idea that Adam was a type of whom Messiah would be the antitype was an unwarranted idea, the assumptions and arguments that go to support are only too likely to partake of the same baseless or fanciful character. We are no more bound to accept the principles and reasonings of the present passage as valid than we are to accept the Old Testament criticism and exegesis of 1 Cor. xv. 45 as historical. In both cases, and notably in the first, the writer is simply making use of popular arguments, for the purpose of establishing a popular opinion, with a view to the ends of popular persuasion. Even the statement with which the paragraph opens, that sin and death entered the world through a specific transgression of Adam, cannot be relied on as a dogmatic opinion of the apostle's own. His dogmatic opinion, so far as he has a dogmatic opinion on the

subject of human sin, is to be sought in chapters i.-iii. ; and the statement of v. 12 merely reflects the popular impression as to how the narrative in Genesis should be interpreted. The statement may be the expression of an objective fact, but whether a fact or not the apostle would have made use of it all the same, on the ground that it was a popular opinion suited to bear out his main contention.

(3.) Had the Apostle Paul held the doctrine that the genesis of the present essential sinfulness of human flesh is to be found in the fall of Adam, it is quite inexplicable, and even incredible, that he should not have distinctly enunciated such a doctrine, nor traced the parallelism between it and the doctrine of righteousness, or sanctification, or spiritualisation through Christ. If the fleshly part of human nature became what it is now, essentially and characteristically sinful, through Adam, and if the spiritual part of human nature became what it is now, essentially and characteristically righteous through Christ, nothing, surely, could have been more to the apostle's purpose than to have stated and emphasised the fact. The aim of the whole paragraph is to establish a parallel between the method of ruin through Adam and the method of restoration through Christ, and this would have furnished the amplest and most satisfactory possible basis for such a parallel. Yet the apostle, so far from appealing to what was so obvious, and would have been so apposite and decisive a line of argumentation, rather appears as if he meant expressly to exclude the possibility of such an appeal, by resting his case on another, a very out-of-the-way, and an altogether disputable basis. In vv. 12-19, the condemnation of men is made to turn partly on their own personal conscious sins, and partly on the original transgression of Adam ; but there is no attempt at connecting the personal sins of men with the transgression of Adam, no assertion that since the fall human nature is necessarily and essentially sinful, not even the statement that sin exists as a reigning, tyrannising power in human nature, striving to reduce the whole person into subjection to itself. It is not till we come to vv. 20, 21, and to the introduction of the law, that sin shows itself as a reigning power in the flesh, opposed by the reigning power of righteousness in the



spirit, and as we know that the Apostle Paul apprehended the true nature of sin in its relation to the law only after his conversion, we are led to conclude that the distinction of flesh and spirit in their essential antagonism to one another is the direct product of reflection on his own Christian experience, and that the sinfulness of the flesh presented itself simply as an empirical fact, not as in any way a deduction from the doctrine of the fall.

(4.) In 1 Cor. xv. 45 *seq.* (*cf.* 2 Cor. iv. 16—v. 3), where the apostle does touch on the genesis of the present essential sinfulness of the flesh, he does not trace it to the sin of Adam. The characteristic attributes of the flesh are no more traced to the fact that it is fallen than the characteristic attributes of the spirit are traced to the fact that it is unfallen. On the contrary, the flesh is sinful, perishing, mortal, because it is of the earth, earthy, because it belongs to the world of the seen and temporal, just as the spirit is righteous, incorruptible, and immortal, because it is of heaven, heavenly, because it belongs to the world of the unseen and eternal. The exegetical arguments by which this position is supported may be considered faulty and unconvincing, but so are some of the principles and reasonings underlying Rom. v. 12-19, and it is not to be denied that the intrinsic probabilities are altogether in favour of the view presented in the former of these passages, and against the view suggested, it may be, though certainly not articulately expressed, in the latter.

(5.) For, finally, the doctrine that the flesh or physical constitution of Adam, having been originally absolutely sinless and immortal, was so completely changed in consequence of the first transgression as to be henceforth essentially and characteristically sinful and mortal, is (as Phleiderer justly says) an “astounding doctrine.” The Apostle Paul undoubtedly teaches that sin can be destroyed only with the destruction of the flesh (*cf. e.g.,* 1 Cor. v. 5), and the natural—may we not say the necessary?—inference from this is that sin was created with the creation of the flesh. How could human flesh, if it was once sinless, have become, through the fall, *essentially* corrupt—so corrupt that the Almighty Spirit of God Himself cannot purify it—that it must be mortified,

destroyed, or brought to nought, if the person to whom it belongs is to be freed from sin? The idea is barely conceivable. If it do not involve a plain impossibility, it has, at least, nothing in its favour, and everything against it. And it is rendered all the more exceptionable, not to say inadmissible, by the fact that according to the Bible writers, including especially Paul (Rom. viii. 20 *seq.*), the whole physical world shares in the present constitutional degradation of man. If man be sinful and mortal because he is of the earth, earthy, it is easy to understand how external nature should be represented as degraded along with him, but the case is altered entirely if man became sinful and mortal in consequence of a definite, historical, sinful act. In view of the settled conclusions of modern science, the idea of a degradation in the physical constitution of man, accompanied by a corresponding degradation in the constitution of the world around him, is, I am afraid, wholly incredible and untenable. No one, at anyrate, ought to feel warranted in attributing such an idea to the Apostle Paul, except under pressure of the most stringent evidence, and, as it happens, there is no direct evidence whatever; rather, the evidence lies in an opposite direction.

The reader will thus see that the doctrine of original sin, as commonly held, has little, if any, New Testament evidence to support it. He will see, also, how slender and vacillating is the New Testament testimony in favour of the current doctrine of the fall: slender, because the origin of human sin in an historical fall is distinctly taught only in a single New Testament passage (unless we include a few incidental references elsewhere to the narrative in Genesis), while the structure of that passage is such as to account for the point being assumed, on the ground that it was a popular opinion, without implying that it is the only or the proper apostolic solution of the question at issue; and vacillating, because in another passage the origin of human sinfulness and subjection to death is attributed to nature, alike in the case of the first man and of all who bear his image, there being no allusion to, but, rather, a manifest exclusion of, an historical fall. On general considerations, Scriptural as well as scientific, the latter solution of the

problem must be regarded as by far the most probable. Nor, after what has been said, does it appear that any very serious objection can be urged against it. It merely requires that the narrative in Genesis relating to the fall, like that relating to the creation, should be understood, not literally, that is, as embodying an historical event, but figuratively, that is, as embodying an abstract idea. A difficulty can hardly be raised on the score of the Divine justice, for the way in which theologians endeavour to vindicate the Divine justice receives no countenance whatever from the Apostle Paul. They maintain—sometimes expressly, sometimes only by implication—that for infants to be born in a sinful state, and liable to the penalties incident to that state, would be unjust or unworthy of God, unless the first sin of Adam were imputed to them. But the apostle asserts no such thing. In Rom. v. 12-21 not a word is said about infants, either directly or indirectly, nor, if the exposition above given be correct, is there any affirmation of the doctrine of original sin. What the apostle says is, that it would be unjust for men to suffer on account of their own sins, unless the Mosaic law had first been communicated to them, and this is a case having nothing whatever to do either with infants or with original sin, and one which, by the admission of theologians themselves, could easily be reconciled with the Divine justice without the aid of Adam's transgression. As to original sin—if it be a fact, it *must* be consistent with the Divine justice. But neither in Paul's writings, nor elsewhere, is there any attempt to demonstrate its consistency. Certainly, there is no idea of ascribing it to the imputation of the first transgression. In the passage where there is mention of something like the imputation of the first transgression, there is no mention of original sin. In the passage where there is mention of original sin, there is no mention of the imputation of the first transgression, but, rather, a manifest exclusion of it. We have, therefore, no warrant whatever for connecting original sin with the imputed transgression of Adam, and the thing itself is neither more nor less difficult to reconcile with the Divine justice in the case of the first man than in the case of all his descendants.

It may added, that the Divine justice has to fear nothing

so much as the zeal of its more ardent vindicators. They are perpetually setting down things as inconsistent with the character of God, which every one sees to be facts, and hence they provoke the inference, that either God has no existence, or else, that having an existence, He has no character. Wise men will always be much more concerned to avail themselves of the Divine mercy, so far as it is placed within their reach, than to busy themselves about such purely speculative questions as the origin of evil, and its relation to the character and government of God. The Divine justice may be safely left to vindicate itself, as it will, no doubt, ultimately do to the satisfaction of all reasonable beings.

To sum up. The paragraph Rom. v. 12-21 contains an attempt to establish a connection between the one man Adam and the death of all his posterity, corresponding to the connection that is known to subsist between the One Man Christ and the life of all believers. The comparison is practically the same as in 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22, 45, *seq.*, but it is worked out in a different way. By a very artificial, and not very conclusive, line of argument, the writer endeavours to prove that Adam's original act of disobedience has a direct bearing on the death of all men, similar to that which Christ's fulness of obedience confessedly has on the life of all men. Difference is acknowledged between the two cases, in so far as Adam's disobedience was a single isolated act, while Christ's obedience is abundant, consisting of many acts. On the whole, agreement is maintained, though by no means to the extent of comparing original sin to sanctification. On the contrary, the doctrine of original sin is conspicuous only by its absence, and the antithesis between the reigning power of much indwelling sin and the reigning power of much indwelling righteousness appears only in v. 21, as a consequence of the introduction of the law, after the comparison, which forms the main subject of the paragraph, has been concluded. Throughout the previous verses, it is neither original sin, nor merely actual sin, to which the ruin of mankind is ascribed, but actual sin, combined with the first transgression of Adam. But the principles and reasonings by which this idea is supported are of such a nature as to demonstrate plainly that it



is without any solid foundation in fact, that it rests on the forms of thought and opinion current in the apostle's own day, and of which he avails himself for hortatory or practical purposes, that it owes its existence to an attempt on the apostle's part to accommodate that scheme of salvation, whose power and reality he had himself experienced, to ideas and impressions already present to the minds of his readers. It is evident, in fact, that the position maintained in these verses has been determined neither by reason, nor by Scripture, nor by the requirements of the apostle's system of thought, as touching human sinfulness, and the method of deliverance from it, but by the Rabbinical conceit with which his readers' minds were pre-occupied, that Christ to be Christ must be the antitype of Adam. It follows that the present cannot be accepted as the regulative passage on the method of human ruin, since it contains a merely artificial representation of that method, squared and adjusted to the method of restoration; that we are not to look for a truly exact correspondence between the method of ruin and the method of restoration, as if the one had been expressly intended to constitute a type of the other; and especially that we cannot hope to determine the exact method of restoration from the exact method of ruin (supposing the latter to be definitely ascertainable), nor, *vice versâ*, the exact method of ruin from the exact method of restoration. Still, the natural inference is, that the form which the parallel assumes in v. 21, though presented as merely secondary, is really the primary and more exact form. We have only to project the law, in some form or other, back to the beginning of the race, in order to include all men under the latter form of the parallel even more completely than they are included under the former. And since the method of ruin suggested in 1 Cor. xv. 45, the *natural* method, as we might call it, is, notwithstanding the popular unhistorical exegesis on which it is based, the more feasible in itself, and the more accordant to the indications of science, as well as the more likely complement to the apostle's general teaching on the subject of human sinfulness, it may be reasonably accepted—so far, that is, as one may care to accept or adopt any definite opinion on a point so purely speculative and unimportant—till we obtain clearer light.

## CHAPTER V.

THE DOCTRINAL SYSTEM OF THE EPISTLE TO THE  
HEBREWS.

THE investigation of last chapter, if it has not given us any very clear or complete insight into the method of salvation through Christ, has, at least, prepared the way for an accurate apprehension and presentation of that method, by putting us in possession of the leading aspects and features of human ruin. We began with the remark, that the plan of salvation must be gathered from passages where it is expressed in properly apostolic language, rather than from passages where the expression of it is entangled with the forms of thought, and opinion, and exegesis current in Old Testament and early Christian times. Two passages were selected to begin with, that appeared to offer what was required; but it is now evident that both repose to a greater or less extent on the Old Testament; both are tinged with the phases of opinion current at the time when they were written—with the peculiar Rabbinical exegesis that is so apt to betray the interpreter; and both are, therefore, indifferently suited to bring out, with scientific exactness, the method of salvation which we are seeking to elicit. Nothing, indeed, is more remarkable than the extent to which the form of the New Testament has been affected by the contemporary notions and impressions respecting the Old. The originality and independence of mind which the apostles claimed and exercised within their allotted province (the Gospel of the grace of God) is not itself more manifest than is the fact that they are constantly hanging their ideas on the pegs of current opinion, and driving them home by seizing and turning to account the

hammer of popular prepossession. Of this we shall find many examples as we proceed.

Some advantage might be obtained by proceeding at once to examine the sixth and following chapters of Romans, where we should find the redemptive or saving process presented in separation from the process of ruin, and traced through its remaining stages till grace merges itself in glory. But on the whole it will be more convenient to give the precedence to passages where the preliminary stages are more fully canvassed, since we shall thus be enabled to gain an orderly conception of the whole process, by starting from the fountain-head and following the stream throughout its entire course. In Rom. vi.-viii. it is the experience of the saved, the redeemed, the followers, the younger sons, that is mainly treated of, while the corresponding experience of the Saviour, the Redeemer, the Leader, the First-born, is merely touched on indirectly and, as it were, incidentally. Indeed, the same may be said with a measure of truth of Paul's writings in general. The Apostle Paul writes very fully of the fact of human ruin. He also writes very fully of what is known as the application of redemption, that is, of the redemptive process in the experience of believers. But his treatment of what is known as the impetration of redemption, that is, of the redemptive process in the experience of Christ, is much less full and complete. In the passages that have just passed under review, for example, the problem of human ruin is dealt with in its whole extent, in Adam personally as well as in all his descendants; whereas the problem of human restoration is dealt with only in part,—viz., in so far as it concerns the persons of believers; Christ is contemplated as already in the position of head of the new race, and little or nothing is said as to how he attained to that position. We find, indeed, on coming from Rom. v. to vi. that Christ has passed through a process of crucifixion or death to sin as well as a process of resurrection to righteousness; but this information is conveyed to us only indirectly in course of explaining that believers pass through experiences similar to those of Christ, the nature, origin, and meaning of Christ's experiences not being distinctly stated. The most notable passage in the whole of Paul's writings

bearing on the so-called impetration of redemption is Rom. iii. 25, 26. But, instead of starting from that somewhat curt and isolated passage, it will be well to take up, in the first instance, the Epistle to the Hebrews, where the language is very similar, and where the earlier stages in the process of redemption are treated with especial fulness of detail. All the more appropriate will it be to deal with the Epistle to the Hebrews at the present stage, because, as we shall find, the position assumed in it with regard to sin appears to be quite identical with that which we have now met and discussed in 1 Cor. xv., and because the idea of a typical relationship between law and Gospel, which pervades the Epistle to the Hebrews, constitutes a point of contact with the typical relationship between Adam and Christ, which underlies both 1 Cor. xv. 22 *seq.* and Rom v. 12 *seq.* The two epistles, Romans and Hebrews, are the twin pillars upon which the fabric of Christian doctrine rests. Salvation and not sin is the proper and leading subject of both. The one gives us the fullest account of the experience of Christ, the Saviour; the other the fullest account of the experiences of Christians, the saved. Each epistle contains a soteriological system complete in itself, but the manner of presentation, and the prominence given to the different parts, is different in the two cases, so that by combining both we obtain the completest available view. As the higher exegesis of the last-named epistle is in a more backward condition than that of perhaps any other part of the New Testament, it will require to be handled at some length.

The author's view of the plan of salvation is presented with tolerable completeness, and divested, to a considerable extent, of figurative phraseology borrowed from the Old Testament ritual system in the paragraph ii. 5-18, which we may take as a basis from which to start. The passage is slightly complicated by the circumstance that the train of thought reposes on an Old Testament quotation, which the author, indulging in a practice common to him with the other New Testament writers, manipulates so as to suit his argument, and the meaning of which, as he interprets it, is not quite easy to discover, or, at least, to settle absolutely beyond dispute. The following attempt to convey the full sense of the



earlier portion of the paragraph is not put forward without having first been somewhat carefully considered.

“For not [as God put the present old earthly creation under law-giving angels in fact, so also in destiny] under [law-giving] angels he put the future [new heavenly] creation of which we are speaking. But [on the contrary, he put the *whole* of the future new heavenly creation under grace-receiving men in destiny, even as] one somewhere testified, saying, ‘What is man that Thou art [graciously] mindful of him? or the son of man that Thou [graciously] visitest him? [After] having made him for a little under [law-giving] angels, thou [graciously] crownedst [= shalt have crowned] him [for ever] with glory and honour, having put *all* things under his feet.’ For in having put *all* things under him [in destiny], he hath left nothing [under law-giving angels and] not put under him [in destiny]. But now we do not yet see all things put under him [in fact]. But the [man] Jesus, [after] having been made for a little under [law-giving] angels, we do [now] see [graciously (Phil. ii. 9)] crowned [for ever] with glory and honour on account of the suffering of death, He having tasted death by [the help of] the grace of God, in order that He might benefit every [man by giving the help of the grace of God to them that are suffering death as the condition of being graciously crowned for ever with glory and honour (v. 18; iv. 15, 16; Rom. viii. 17)].”

These verses contain implicit if not explicit the author's doctrine of sin, and also, in part, his doctrine of salvation. In order to reach the proper point of view for interpreting them, it is necessary to recall one or two of the most general conceptions that are present as underlying presuppositions in every part of the epistle, and whose influence here may be distinctly traced.

The most fundamental antithesis which the epistle contains is undoubtedly that between the Law and the Gospel, the Old Covenant and the New, the Word spoken from Sinai through Moses, and the Word spoken from Zion through Jesus. The writer's aim is a practical one—viz., to commend the Gospel scheme of salvation by showing that it is at once like and unlike the law scheme of salvation: like, in respect that it

fulfils the conditions of a type of which the law was the anti-type (such is the writer's use of these terms): unlike, in respect that the Gospel and everything connected with it is of a higher order or nature than the law and everything connected with it. The epistle as a whole is a hortatory or persuasive discourse—a "word of exhortation" (xiii. 22)—not a cold didactic composition. It is a piece of rhetorical pleading, adapted to readers holding peculiar opinions,—as we should say, *prejudices*,—and placed in special circumstances: Hebrews, namely, who had been taught to regard the law, particularly the ceremonial part of it, as a thing of immediate Divine institution and of supreme excellence, in following after which life and salvation were to be found, and who, in consequence, could not be brought to accept and hold fast the Gospel, unless they were assured that it was something better, higher, more divine, more excellent than the law, and something which God Himself intended should supersede and take the place of the law. It will appear by and by that the author, in endeavouring to back up by Scripture authority a variety of practical exhortations, vacillates somewhat in the view which he takes of the law, attributing to it a character suited to bear out the argument immediately in hand; but his leading mode of regarding it does differ materially from that of the Apostle Paul. When he speaks of the law, he has in contemplation chiefly and characteristically the ceremonial law. He thinks of the law in the form in which it existed and was practised in his own day, and in which it stood directly opposed to the Gospel. And this means that to him the law is a dead letter, divorced from the living Spirit of God, and having no proper or saving validity. In contrast to the Gospel, which contains the grace or Spirit of God (iv. 16; vi. 4; x. 29), and has power to regenerate and renew the heart (vi. 1, 6; x. 22), to redeem, purify, or sanctify from sin (ix. 15; x. 14, &c.), the law is a dispensation of shadows (x. 1, &c.), of carnal, weak, dead, profitless, evanescent ordinances (ix. 9, 10; vii. 18; viii. 13, &c.), that can from their very nature effect nothing toward the removal of sin (x. 1, 4, 11), toward the saving, perfecting, or bringing nigh to (*i.e.*, into fellowship with) God of the sinner (vii. 19, 25). Plainly,

therefore, the law is just another name for the dead, fleshly, external, naturalistic Judaism of the apostolic age, while the Gospel is another name for the living, spiritual, internal, God-given Christianity of the apostolic age.

Intimately bound up with this main antithesis between the law and grace or the Gospel are several other antitheses of scarcely subordinate importance. In particular, there are the grand contrasts between the spheres—local or *quasi*-local and temporal—of the law and grace respectively, to which may be added, as closely allied and in part identified, the contrast between the flesh and the spirit in the human constitution. The local sphere of the law is “the earth” (viii. 4; xii. 25, 26)—“this creation” (ix. 11). The local or *quasi*-local sphere of grace is heaven (iv. 14; ix. 23, 24, &c.). The one is the region of things that can be seen (xi. 2, 3), and touched (xii. 18), and shaken (v. 28)—things that are made; the other, the region of things unseen (xi. 2, 3), and that cannot be touched (xii. 18, &c.), nor shaken (xii. 27)—things that have not been made with hands (ix. 11). The things in the one region are material, physical, fleshly (vii. 16; ix. 10, 13, &c.), weak (vii. 28), sinful (v. 3), shadowy (x. 1), imperfect (ix. 11), inferior (ix. 23), vanishing (viii. 13), dying or dead (vii. 8; ix. 14)—being at the best only visible symbols or antitypes (ix. 23, 24), or parabolic representations (ix. 9) of the things in the other region which are immaterial, moral, spiritual (vi. 4; ix. 14; x. 29; xii. 23), powerful (vii. 16), sinless or holy (ix. 28; x. 18, &c.), real (x. 1), perfect (ix. 11), superior (x. 34), abiding (*id.*), living (ix. 14; x. 20, 38; xii. 9). Again, the temporal spheres of the law and grace are contrasted, the former belonging to this world, including “of old time” (i. 1) and “these days” (v. 2), “the time now present” (ix. 9), the latter to the world or the age to come (ii. 5; vi. 5). This age extends from the foundation of the world to the consummation of the ages at the final judgment when Christ shall come again (ix. 26, 28). The age to come extends from the Second Coming of Christ onward throughout eternity. It is no doubt true that the death of Christ is often spoken of as marking the boundary line between the two worlds: this world, the age in which the

law prevails, is identified with the pre-Christian age ; the world to come, the age in which grace prevails, with the post-Christian age. But that is evidently due to the fact that the death of Christ is thought of as taking place "on the last of these days" (i. 2), or "at the consummation of the ages" (ix. 26). The Second Coming and the regeneration of the world are conceived of as following almost immediately after Christ's death in the flesh. The intervening period is so inconsiderable as to be left out of account. Just as judgment is the next great step in the history of the individual after death, so the general judgment and the end of all things is the next great step in the history of the world after the death of Christ (ix. 27, 28). The interval between the first and second coming of Christ is a blank as regards world-historical development, just as the interval between death and judgment is a blank as regards individual development. The "time of reformation" (ix. 10), when mankind shall be delivered from bondage under the elements of the present material world, and introduced to the liberty of the glory of the children of God in the spiritual heavenly world, is practically identified with the time of Christ. In point of fact, however, the meaning of the writer is that the old covenant period extends from the foundation of the world to its consummation, while the new covenant period is identical with the eternal heavenly world period. As long as flesh and blood, weakness, sin, imperfection, unholiness, continue to exist, so long the law must continue to reign ; and only when spirit, power, righteousness, perfection, holiness, have become all-pervasive, will the reign of grace have become absolute. In other words, only when earth has been transformed into heaven, will the Old Covenant have completely given place to the New.

These antitheses between this world and the world to come, between time and eternity, between earth and heaven, between the flesh and the spirit, the mortal and the immortal, in the human constitution, belong exclusively to the later Judaism. In old Israel, time and eternity, earth and heaven, the mortal and the immortal, had not yet been differentiated. The relation between God and His people was thought of as confined to the present world, and as bounded by the life in the flesh. Not till the religious spirit had been utterly baffled in the



attempt to reconcile with its idea of God the observed order of nature and providence, did it begin to seek the issues of God's moral government in a world above and beyond the present, and in a life after death. By the time at which our author wrote, however, these distinctions had become quite familiar, and in using them he is merely working upon received ideas.

Coming to the verses already quoted, it is easy to see that these general ideas, which were present to the mind of the writer of the epistle, but not to that of the writer of the psalm, has led the former to put upon the words which he borrowed from the latter a meaning very different from their original one. How far the historical sense of the psalm is altered or departed from is a point requiring to be specially considered. There is no doubt that the New Testament writer modifies the Old Testament writer's meaning in at least these two particulars: (1) The phrase "a little" as used by the writer of the psalm is meant to express degree—the degree in which man was made lower than the angels or Elohim; whereas the present writer takes it to refer to time—the time during which man is made lower than the angels: (2) As the passage stands in the psalm it is purely historical, describing the *exalted* estate of man in the present world; as quoted and interpreted by our author it is historical in so far as the words "Thou madest him for a little lower than the angels" are taken to describe the *lowly* estate of man in the present world—prophetic in so far as the words, "Thou crownedst him with glory and honour, &c.," are taken to describe the *exalted* estate of man in the world to come. In these main changes there is involved the further change, that whereas in the psalm the "mindful visitations" of God refer to the natural blessings bestowed upon man as a denizen of earth, to all that goes to make up his exalted estate in the *present* world; in the epistle the "mindful visitations" of God are taken to refer to the gracious or spiritual blessings reserved for "the just man made perfect," to that which constitutes his crown of life in the world *to come*. Scarcely less certain is it that the writer of the epistle construes the expression "made lower than the angels" in a sense harmonising with his general

system of thought, and not in the sense which the words were originally used to convey. When the author of the psalm says, "Thou hast made him to lack [but] a little of the Elohim," he means to describe the position of extraordinary exaltation occupied by man as lord of the present earthly creation; but it is scarcely conceivable that the author of the epistle should put upon the words precisely the same construction, since he takes them to describe not the exalted but the enslaved or degraded position which man occupies in the present world (v. 15), in contrast to the exalted position which he is destined to occupy in the world to come. Granting that it might be a humiliation for Christ to be made but a little inferior to the angels (not to speak of God), yet even in His case the expression "made lower than the angels," when so interpreted, sounds strangely euphemistic as a description of the position which he assumed by the incarnation, when in point of fact he "took the form of a *slave*, and was made in the likeness of [enslaved, degraded] men, and [in consequence of] being found in fashion as a man humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea the death of the cross" (Phil. ii. 7, 8; cf. Heb. ii. 15). And in the case of men generally, it would be passing strange, if words which were originally used to describe the race as occupying a position of almost God-like exaltation, were taken *under the same construction*, to describe it as occupying a position of almost devil-like degradation. It is true that both the writer of the epistle and the writer of the psalm are speaking of the same race of men; but then to the writer of the epistle there are two worlds, and two worlds to a certain extent interpenetrating each other—to the writer of the psalm there is only one: by the former all that is good and noble and God-like in man is viewed as belonging to the future heavenly world, and only what is base and degraded to the present earthly; the latter regards man and everything that he is or has as belonging to the present earthly world, and to that only: and this makes a *world* of difference. It is natural, therefore, to expect some other construction for the expression "made lower than the angels" than that which it bears in the psalm.

Now, it is tolerably clear that the author of Hebrews,

inspired and guided by current opinion, regards the angels, not only as the givers of the law (ii. 2; Gal. iii. 19; Acts vii. 53), but as the heads of the present earthly creation on which the law is imposed, the revelation of the law having been carried out by them in the exercise of their general function as superintendents of the present world and its inhabitants. The angels were the instruments of God's revelation under the Old Testament dispensation while the Son is the instrument of his revelation under the New; and as the world to come (including renewed mankind) is destined to be subjected to Christ (1 Cor. xv. 27, 28), the revealer of the Gospel, so the present world (including unrenewed mankind) is thought of as subjected to angels, the revealers of the law. So much seems to be plainly implied in the reference of the sentence with which the paragraph opens, which points back to the antithesis immediately preceding between the angels who spoke the law and the Lord who spoke the Gospel, while the words of v. 8, "He left nothing unsubjected to him," suggest the same idea. And we know that Christ, in the incarnation, was "born of a woman, born under the law, that He might redeem them which were under the law" (Gal. iv. 4, 5); he was born into the state of "slavery under the elements of the world" (v. 3)—slavery under the flesh, and therefore also under the ordinances proper to the flesh (Heb. ix. 10),—the state which all men occupy by nature; he became part of the "present evil world" from which He seeks to deliver men (Gal. i. 4), and in so becoming, He became *subject to the angels* as the heads of this world, and the givers of the law which holds it in slavery and subjection through sin. In this sense, therefore, Christ might readily be said to be "made for a little lower than the angels." And the same might be said with equal propriety of men in general. It is of course to be admitted that such an interpretation is alien to the historical sense of the words of the psalm, whether in the Hebrew original or in the Greek translation, but, in view of the whole connection, that is a recommendation rather than otherwise, and it cannot be denied that the New Testament writer's quotation gains greatly in point and definiteness when so understood.

One difficulty may occur to the reader. Both the writer of the psalm and the writer of the epistle, when they describe man as made lower than the angels, speak of the human race as a whole, and as at present constituted ; and their statement bears that man was placed in his present position *by God*. Now, whatever may be the case with the writer of the psalm, it is certain that the writer of the epistle regards the present condition of man as one of slavery and degradation under the elements of the world, under sin, the law, death and the devil. There is the same contrast between the present and the future state of men in general as between the earthly and the heavenly state of Jesus Christ. Christ, while on earth, was in a state of humiliation, and is now exalted in heaven to a state of glorification ; and so every believer, from undergoing a corresponding degradation in the present life, is destined to be raised to a similar height of glorification in the life beyond. In the case of Christ, to be “made lower than the angels” implied degradation, not merely beneath Godhead or beneath angelhood, but degradation such as to place him on a level with man as he now is, in slavery to sin, the law, and death ; although it is incorrect to say of him,—

“Nor only as a man appears,  
But stoops a *servant* low,”

since the passage, of which these words are a pretended paraphrase, represents man as essentially enslaved, so that to be a man and to be a slave or “servant” are one and the same thing. In the case of men in general, therefore, to be “made lower than the angels,” must imply being placed in the state of profound degradation which man at present occupies. Now, with respect to Christ there is no manner of doubt that it was *God* that “sent forth His Son, born of a woman”—born, that is, into the present position of man—“born under [the curse of] the law, that He might redeem them which were under [the curse of] the law” (Gal. iv. 4, 5) ; indeed, it is said expressly that God “made Him to be *sin* on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. v. 21) ; and therefore, so far as Christ is concerned, there is no difficulty whatever in the statement that God “made Him for



a little lower than the angels," understood in the sense that God placed him in the present sinful, enslaved, degraded position of man. But with respect to men in general the case is somewhat different, the common opinion being that man was reduced to his present state of corruption and degradation, not by God who created Him "very good," but in consequence of the fall, which was his own act. Yet of him also the writer says expressly, "Thou [God] madest him for a little lower than the angels," and beyond all question these words must bear the same meaning when applied to men in general as when applied to Christ, otherwise the author's reasoning will be completely subverted.

However, it must be observed that this difficulty, if it be a difficulty, is involved in the words, "Thou madest him lower than the angels," whatever construction we may put upon them; for it is quite manifest that these words are applied to man as at present constituted, so that their general meaning can only be, "Thou madest him what he now is," which is equivalent to "Thou madest him sinful, enslaved, degraded." The language of the psalm echoes that of the opening chapter of Genesis—a narrative which is not only prior to, but quite independent of, the narrative of the fall, with which indeed it is very precarious to assume that it was originally intended to have any connection. And, as a matter of fact, there is no evidence that the author of Hebrews has any notion of a fall which affected the state or standing of man. He distinguishes two worlds, the earthly and the heavenly, exactly as Paul does in 1 Cor. xv., who likewise refers to Ps. viii. in proof of the headship of Christ over the world to come (v. 27). By nature man belongs to the world of things seen and temporal, things that have been made, and that shall be shaken or dissolved (xii. 27); by grace he shall be raised to the world of things unseen and eternal, things that have not been made with hands, and that cannot be shaken or dissolved. Men are subject to death and the devil, not because they have fallen from an original state of innocence, but because they are "sharers in flesh and blood" (ii. 14), which, being essentially characterised by sin (v. 3), involves life-long "bondage through fear of death" (ii. 15). Men from their very nature as they

come into the world are "dying" (vii. 8), because "flesh and blood," more briefly "flesh" (v. 7), in common with "this creation" (ix. 11) generally, is weak, corrupt, impure, imperfect, and therefore mortal and perishing. The present world as a whole, and every component part of it, is doomed to destruction, because sin had entered it even from its very foundation (ix. 26), and now everywhere pervades it. But there is no trace of the "astounding doctrine" that the weakness and perishableness of the human constitution, and of the whole created world of which the human constitution is a part, is due to an historical fall on the part of man. On the contrary, the author's idea plainly is that the created world because it is created must necessarily perish, giving place to the world to come (i. 10-12 ; xii. 27). And if the whole created world is naturally weak and perishable, how impossible is it to suppose that the human constitution, which is a part of that world, was originally sinless and destined to eternal existence, or that it ever was different from what it is now. Surely evidence ought to be required before we are called upon to believe any such thing. But where is the requisite evidence to be found? Certainly not in the present epistle. For that human nature, as such, is weak, sinful, mortal, is everywhere taken for granted: the high priest simply because he is "taken from men" is compassed with weakness, and by reason of it [weakness] he is bound as for the people *so also for himself* to offer for sins" (v. 1-3): the children, simply because they "have shared in flesh and blood," are "all their lifetime subject to bondage" under sin, death, and the devil: and Jesus, simply because he became a fellow-partaker with them in "the same" [flesh and blood], fell in like manner under the power of sin, death, and the devil (ii. 14, 15). The author knows of but one contrast to "men that die," and that is "angels" (ii. 16), who are spirits (i. 14), not primitive man, who partook of "flesh and blood" identical with that which "cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. xv. 50), the "kingdom which cannot be shaken" (Heb. xii. 28).

Possibly it will be urged that this is more or less of an argument *ex silentio*, or at least that, in so far as it has a positive foundation, that foundation is of a somewhat pre-

carious character. Though the author alleges that God made man lower than the angels, meaning thereby that man was made by God what he at present is, these words, it may be thought, occur only in an Old Testament quotation, whose original meaning was different, which is merely accommodated to illustrate and enforce a special point, and which cannot therefore be regarded as a secure basis to rest a theory on. But the fact that the author conveys his ideas through the medium of an Old Testament quotation, which was not originally designed to convey them, proves nothing as to the nature of the ideas,—what they are, and whether they do or do not possess objective validity,—still less does it prove that they either presuppose the existence of an historical fall, or leave open the question of its existence. The whole standpoint of the epistle appears to be quite identical with that of 1 Cor. xv. There is a striking parallelism in the use of the expressions “flesh and blood,” “weakness,” “power” [of the world to come], “glory,” &c., as well as in the grand distinction between earth and heaven as the spheres respectively of flesh and spirit, corruption and incorruption, sin and holiness, life and death, the temporal and the eternal. And while both writers alike endeavour to confirm their views by reference to Old Testament authority, neither takes any account either of the history or the fact of the fall. Both writers, it is true, are concerned mainly with the method of salvation, and only incidentally with the method of ruin; but though this might account for the question of the fall not being expressly alluded to, it cannot affect the circumstance that principles are enunciated regarding the world and man that exclude the existence of any such thing. The truth probably is that it never occurred to the author of the Hebrews to ask the question, How did man come to be placed in his present position? The New Testament writers are so infinitely concerned about practical questions, and so infinitely unconcerned about questions purely speculative, that they never directly investigate or discuss the origin of human sinfulness. The *fact* of human sinfulness was given them in experience: their sole, supreme, over-powering concern is to explain and enforce the method of deliverance. They never touch on the method of ruin,

except in the way of illustrating the method of restoration, and they appear to hold themselves free to adopt any of the popular theories on the former question that will square with, or serve as an antithesis to, their own theory on the latter. From all that appears, therefore, we shall only be imitating their example by suspending our judgment, and leaving the matter an open, undetermined question.

Such, then, is the condition of man as nature fashions him and as grace finds him. He is the hopeless slave of sin and death, bound over to serve and suffer at the instigation of the powers of evil, and utterly unable to extricate himself. And such, also, in all essential respects, is the position into which Christ descended. With a view to effecting the salvation of "every man"—an expression, by the way, which is to be taken absolutely without limitation—the eternal Son of God, being the same in substance and equal in power and glory with the Father (i. 3), assumed the flesh and blood common to every man—an act which on His part involved supreme self-abasement, since it implied, not merely the emptying of Himself to an unknown extent of the attributes of divinity (Phil. ii. 7), but also and more especially slavery or subjection to sin and death (Heb. ii. 14). There is not the smallest pretence for alleging that the flesh of Christ differed in any respect from that of the men whom He came to save. Rather is it plain that the writer's whole argument throughout the paragraph turns on the absolute identity of the two. Its nerve would be completely cut if that identity were in the least impaired. And this is equally true whether we assume the existence of an historical fall or not. It was the flesh and blood *common to all His brethren*, the nature of man *as at present constituted*, that Christ took upon Him. In particular, the human nature of Christ was such as to render Him liable to death, the penalty which sin, or the devil considered as the impersonation of sin, had power to inflict on Him and all other men alike, and this it could have done only if it was pervaded by the principle of sin as the nature of all other men is. The power of the devil to inflict death, and the power of sin, or of the law through sin, to inflict death, are evidently one and the same. The bringing to nought of the devil, and the bring-



ing to nought of the body of sin, or of the principle of sin inherent in the body, are likewise one and the same. It follows that the very purpose for which Christ became incarnate,—which was that He might bring to nought the devil, or the principle of sin inherent in human flesh as such, or at least as at present constituted,—required that the flesh which He assumed should be ordinary human flesh, *pervaded, as it is, by the principle of sin*. When, therefore, Jesus is said to have been made lower than the angels in order that He might suffer death, this means that He was made in all respects like as we are, and more especially that He was made sinful and subject to death as we are : just as, when He was crowned with glory and honour on account of the suffering of death, wherein the devil, or the principle of sin in the flesh, was brought to nought, He was made in all respects what we shall be, if we suffer and die with Him, and thereby bring to nought in ourselves the principle of sin in the flesh. But this point is so directly involved in the writer's train of thought, as has been already in part shown, and will be further shown presently, that it may almost be deemed a waste of time to argue it.

“As grace finds him,” we said. For, according to the unanimous testimony of the New Testament writers, “By grace have ye been *saved* through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God ; not of works, that no man should glory, for we are His [God the Holy Spirit's] workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works” (Eph. iii. 8-10). The whole process of salvation from beginning to end is the work of Divine grace. So it is represented to be by the author of Hebrews not less certainly than by other writers (ii. 9 ; iv. 16 ; vi. 4 ; x. 29 ; xii. 15, 28 ; xiii. 9). And there is no doubt that in this epistle, as elsewhere, the grace of God is to all practical intents quite identical with the Spirit of God, who is therefore spoken of as the “Spirit of grace” (x. 29). The grace of God toward sinful men manifests itself in the communication of His Spirit, and the work of redeeming the world, in so far as it is positive or constructive, is accomplished solely by the operation of the Divine Spirit, the negative or destructive side of the process being brought about through suffering and death, as the effect of sin, or of the law through

sin. This is true, and equally true of the process of redemption as accomplished on the person of Christ, and of the same process as accomplished on the persons of His followers; witness the concluding words of the above quotation, "*that by the grace of God he should taste death on behalf of every man.*" The sum of the changes that took place on the person of Christ from the moment of the incarnation to the moment of His completed glorification were accomplished—in so far as they were positive or constructive, by the operation of the Divine Spirit within Him (Luke ii. 40; Acts x. 38; Rom. viii. 10, 11; Eph. i. 19-21, &c.)—in so far as they were negative or destructive, by the operation of suffering and death without Him (Heb. ii. 10; v. 8, 9; Col. ii. 11, 12, &c.). Again, the sum of the changes that take place on the person of each believer, from the moment when regeneration begins to the moment when glorification is completed, are accomplished—in so far as they are positive or constructive, by the operation of the Divine Spirit within Him (John iii. 5; Rom. viii. 9, &c.)—in so far as they are negative or destructive, by the operation of suffering and death without Him (Phil. iii. 10, 11; Gal. ii. 19-21, &c.); the changes, both positive and negative, taking place with—*i.e.*, after the example of—Christ (Rom. vi. 4-11). When Jesus tasted death for every man, *by the grace of God*, He offered Himself *through the eternal Spirit* to God (Heb. ix. 14). And when every believer is tried by suffering and death in all respects like as Christ was, he overcomes *by the help of the grace of God* precisely as Christ did (iv. 15, 16). To taste of the heavenly gift is to become partaker of the Holy Ghost, and by Him to be renewed unto repentance, and this is practically equivalent to being saved (vi. 4-6). In short, salvation or redemption is another name for sanctification, and sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit of God, who is therefore the operative embodiment of the grace of God, and the means of salvation (ii. 11).

The concluding clause of the above quotation, "in order that by the grace of God He might taste death on behalf of every man," introduces the subject of the verses that follow. Its connection with what precedes is somewhat difficult to seize, owing to the fact that the main thought is contained in the

prepositional phrase. The tasting of death on behalf of every man was not properly the end of "the suffering of death," as the immediate condition of being "crowned with glory and honour,"—though it was the end of the incarnation (v. 14)—but rather, the *benefiting* (ὠφελεῖν) of every man (*scil.* by saving, sanctifying, or leading them to glory—vv. 10, 11) was the end of the suffering of death as the immediate condition of being crowned with glory and power. The meaning of the clause might be obtained either by connecting it with ἡλαττωμένον, or by rendering "might have tasted death," while connecting it with what immediately precedes; but I have paraphrased it, so as to bring out the real point more clearly. Jesus suffered and was made perfect, being crowned with glory and honour, in order that He might "become the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey Him" (v. 8, 9). Why the sufferings and death of Christ were necessary in order to His personal perfection or glorification—and how they came about—what was their efficient and what their final cause—why such experiences on the part of Christ were demanded as the condition of His benefiting every man—and how, having so suffered and died and been made perfect, He saves all that obey or believe on Him—all these points will be made plain in the sequel.

"For [to show why Jesus had to *suffer death* as the condition of His benefiting every man] it became Him for whom are all things and by whom are all things [= the author, governor, and end of the universe], when many sons were led [from under law-giving Angels] to glory [and honour], to perfect the Leader of their salvation through sufferings. For [to show how the Leader of Salvation came to require *perfecting through sufferings*, in like manner as the led require perfecting through sufferings] both He that sanctifieth [= the Leader] and they who are sanctified [= the led] are all of one [nature = flesh and blood (v. 14)] for which cause He is not ashamed to call them *brethren*, saying, 'I will declare Thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the congregation will I sing Thy praise;' and, again [*fellow-believers*], I [like them] will put my trust in Him; and, again [*children*], 'Behold I and the children which God gave to me.' Therefore [collect-

ing and bringing out the result of what has been said in vv. 11-13, as bearing on the point emphasised in v. 10], since the children [= the led, the sanctified] have shared in flesh and blood [and have thereby become subject to bondage under death and the devil], He [= the Leader, the Sanctifier] Himself also in like manner partook of the same [flesh and blood, and thereby became subject to bondage under death and the devil], in order that through [the suffering of] death He might [directly] bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil [by bringing to nought the principle of sin inherent in his old man, or body of sin (Rom. vi. 6), or flesh of sin (*id.* viii. 3)—so making Himself, or being “made, perfect through sufferings”], and [indirectly] deliver all those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage [by enabling them through the suffering of death to bring to nought him that hath the power of death, that is, the devil, by bringing to nought the principle of sin inherent in their old man, or body of sin (Rom. vi. 6), or flesh of sin (*id.* viii. 3, 4)—so making themselves, or being made, perfect through sufferings (Phil. iii. 10-12)]. For [to offer Scripture proof that the children, the sanctified, the led, have *shared in flesh and blood*], as we know [from Old Testament sources], He taketh not hold [to deliver and lead to glory] of angels [= spirits], but He taketh hold [with that intent] of the seed of Abraham [= flesh and blood]. Wherefore [concluding from the premise thus established, the necessity of the course specified, v. 14, in order to gain the end specified, v. 15] it behoved Him [as Head of renewed mankind] in all things [=in incarnation, suffering, and death] to be made like unto His brethren [the members of renewed mankind], in order that [to express New Covenant realities in terms of their (presumed) Old Covenant types] *He might* [directly] *become a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, so as* [indirectly] *to expiate the sins of the people* [which He is now qualified to do], for [to return to plain speech] in that He Himself hath suffered [death by the help of the grace of God (v. 9 ; v. 7)] under trial [= hath been perfected through sufferings (v. 10), or hath brought to nought the devil (v. 14), or (figuratively speaking) *hath be-*



come a merciful and faithful High Priest (v. 17)], He is able to help [with needed grace (iv. 16)] them that are [suffering death] under trial [=to lead many sons to glory (v. 10), or to deliver all those who are subject to bondage (v. 15), or (figuratively speaking) *to expiate the sins of the people* (v. 17)].”

In these verses, the leading steps in the process of salvation, as it is conceived by our author, can be distinctly made out. The process, viewed in its entirety, consists in translation “out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God’s dear Son”—in other words, from the earthly, fleshly, sinful, degraded, to the heavenly, spiritual, holy, glorified state. Two parties come into separate consideration as undergoing this process—Christ, the so-called leader, or first-born Son of God; and believers, the led, or sanctified, or many younger sons of God. The author does not raise the question as to whether salvation might not have taken place without a leader, or, in other words, whether the incarnation of Christ was *necessary* in order to the salvation of the world, and wherein the necessity, if such existed, might be supposed to lie. That question, so full of fascination for minds of a speculative and scholastic turn, has, ever since Anselm, occupied the attention of theological thinkers, who have, in general, attached to it a degree of importance out of all proportion to the place which it occupies in the New Testament, allowing it to rule their whole conception of the plan of salvation. It does not appear, however, that the New Testament writers ever directly contemplated or reflected on such a question. The writer of our epistle, for example, is content to start from the fact of experience that Christ had become incarnate (ii. 9), and that through Him the Spirit was bestowed, without going back to inquire whether the incarnation was an absolute necessity, and if so, why, or whether the Spirit might not have been given in some other way. Prophecy, it is true, is alleged to have foretold that the sanctifier would be of one nature with the sanctified (vv. 12, 13), and this can be made the basis of proof that the incarnation was necessary (v. 14); but artificial proof of this description is so far from implying that the author regarded the

incarnation as necessary on speculative moral or metaphysical grounds, that, on the contrary, it rather serves to demonstrate that he never went behind the accomplished fact to seek for any such grounds. It cannot be said that there is any substantial antecedent presumption against the idea that many sons should have been led to glory by the direct operation of the Third Person in the Trinity, without the intervention of the Second, as leader, through incarnation, suffering, and death. From all that one could say *à priori*, God might have given His Spirit to regenerate every believer quite apart from the fact that the Son of God had assumed flesh and blood, and passed through a cycle of experiences similar in all respects to those which each believer must pass through. The only sure ground for concluding that the incarnation was necessary is the fact that it has taken place, and the question, *Cur Deus homo?* may be susceptible of a much deeper answer than the apostles had any idea of. It could not possibly be worse answered than it is by Anselm, whose views on the subject are glaringly opposed to the whole round of Scripture teaching, in which nothing is more prominent than the readiness of God to forgive repentant sinners, without limit and without condition. Probably no better or more definite solution will ever be found than that suggested by Jesus Himself in the parable of the vineyard and the wicked husbandmen, where the son is sent in the same line, and on the same mission, with the other servants, and is treated very much in the same way (Matt. xxi. 33-46 ; Luke xx. 9-18). The progress of God's kingdom required that the cause which the prophets had initiated should be taken up and carried forward by one mightier, more divine, more full of the Spirit than they ; and this was enough ; no other or more special reason for the incarnation need be sought, or can fairly be demanded ; none would contribute in any degree to render the matter more intelligible. Every great development in the history of true religion has come through the instrumentality of individuals, in the character of prophets or spiritual teachers, specially endowed and qualified for the work to which they were called, and the greatest of all the developments came through the Son of God Himself, through

whom, indeed, all previous, as well as subsequent, developments might, in a sense, be said to have come, since all were of God, of whom He was the incarnation and revelation (*cf.* i. 1, 2, &c.). If we regard Christ as marking the highest point in the development of true religion, as being the greatest of the prophets, as uniting in His perfected state the fulness of Godhead to the reality of manhood, as constituting the ideal to which the human race, in union with God, is destined to attain, we shall probably not be far from a true conception of the place which He occupied, and the function which He discharged, in the religious history of the world.

On the other hand, our author does distinctly assert the necessity of the sufferings of Christ as incarnate in order to His personal perfection and glorification, and so to His becoming the leader of salvation. And yet, even here caution is needed, if we are not to misunderstand his real position. He has nothing whatever to say as to the necessity of such or such an *amount* of suffering on the part of Christ. The question is not as to what Christ suffered, but as to why He suffered, or how His sufferings are to be viewed and interpreted. In approaching this question, the author takes his stand on the principle that God is the moral governor of the universe—that whatever happens in the world happens under His direction and supervision, or, at least, by His permission, and for His glory—and that human suffering, in particular, is to be regarded as coming direct from the hand of God, and as sent for wise and holy purposes. This is the meaning of the qualifying words, “For whom are all things, and through whom are all things.” There is nothing new in such a conception of the relation of God to the world. It had been worked out and proclaimed by the prophets many centuries previously. All that the writer to the Hebrews does is to apply to the sufferings of Christ (and of believers) the same identical moral principles which the prophets had long before applied to the sufferings of their contemporaries. It became God, he says, when many sons were led to glory, to perfect the leader of their salvation through sufferings; in other words, it would have been inconsistent with the character and government of God to perfect or glorify Christ as incarnate in any

other way than through the medium of suffering and death. This by no means implies that there was anything special either in the nature or in the amount of Christ's sufferings, for, in using these terms, the author is saying no more than he might, and does, say of every believer, whom it likewise becomes God to make perfect through sufferings (xii. 3-11), and whose sufferings are of precisely the same nature as Christ's (ii. 18). The author nowhere speculates as to the necessity of this or that amount of suffering, either in the case of Christ or in that of believers. He simply interprets the meaning of sufferings known from history and experience to exist. And this he does on principles which were just as familiar to his readers and contemporaries as they could be to himself, and which every one would be willing to accept. Indeed, there is not a word in the whole Bible implying that a given amount of suffering is necessary before the anger of God can be appeased on account of human sin. All the threatenings uttered by the prophets were uttered under the condition, express or implied, that if the people repented, the anger of God would be turned away; and the principles of the New Testament writers on the subject of human suffering are just the principles of the Old Testament prophets. As a matter of acknowledged fact, Jesus suffered and died: "we see Jesus, . . . on account of the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour": the sufferings and death of Christ are things which have happened, if not under our own eyes, at least under the eyes of our contemporaries, and under the providential government of God: that it became God to inflict them is therefore a self-evident truth, since, in any other case, they could not have been inflicted. The author's position is simply the *à posteriori* one, which contemplates the sufferings of Christ as already accomplished, and connects them with the Divine government under which they had taken place. Not a word is said as to the degree of suffering which Christ underwent. He experienced "the suffering of death," and so "tasted death" on behalf of every man. He was perfected "through sufferings." He passed "through death," and thereby brought to nought him that had the power of death. He "suffered being tried," in like manner as



His people suffer being tried. Elsewhere it is said, with reference to His sufferings, that He "hath been tried in all respects like as we are" (iv. 15)—that "in the days of His flesh, having offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto Him that was able to save Him from death [to which, for a season, he was in subjection], and having been heard for His godly fear, He, though a Son, yet learned obedience from the things which He suffered" (v. 7, 8). And again, the readers of the epistle are exhorted to run with patient endurance the race set before them, "looking [for an example] to Jesus [as history presents Him to view], the leader and perfecter of faith, who, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame" (xii. 1, 2). All this makes it perfectly clear that the writer professes no special acquaintance with the sufferings of Christ, beyond what is accessible to all his contemporaries; that his knowledge of Christ's earthly experience is entirely derived from history, and not in the least from *à priori* speculation; that he regards the sufferings and death of Christ as entirely of a piece with the sufferings and death of all His followers; and that, if questioned, he could no more have told their extent than he could the extent of Peter's, or John's, or Paul's, than he could the extent of Christ's joys, or than we ourselves could tell, from reading the Gospel history, the extent of either His sufferings or His joys. The author knows merely that Christ, after He became incarnate, and before He again attained to the glorified state in heaven, spent some thirty-three years upon earth, during which He underwent all the ordinary experiences of humanity, including, in particular, the sufferings and trials of humanity, culminating in that death which it is appointed unto all men once to die (ix. 27); while, from the circumstance that His death was the bloody and accursed death of the cross, and that He foresaw the close of His career from the outset, His sufferings at special seasons—of which the most remarkable occurred in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross—appear to have been peculiarly severe. He knows, further, that such a course of suffering on the part of Christ was required to maintain the consistency of the Divine character and government; as

also that it was undergone at the prompting, and in the strength, of the Divine grace or Spirit (ii. 9 ; ix. 14), obtained in answer to prayer (v. 7). He knows, finally, that the sufferings of Christ, while they served to manifest and vindicate the Divine justice, had, at the same time, the effect of perfecting His own person, just as the sufferings of each believer, while serving to manifest and vindicate the Divine justice (1 Pet. iv. 17 ; 2 Thess. i. 5, *seq.*), have, at the same time, the effect of perfecting his own person (Phil. iii. 10). The last is a point of some importance, which must be considered by itself.

Theologians have exercised their ingenuity in attempts to discover some indescribably refined and lofty sense for the word "perfect" (τελειοῦν), as applied to Christ, being led astray by the erroneous notion, that as Christ was never imperfect in the ordinary sense, He could not possibly be made perfect except in an entirely different sense. In plain terms, they have spared no effort to explain away the obvious meaning of the word, which they have usually so far succeeded in doing, as to entangle and mystify both themselves and their readers by the profuse employment of abstract phraseology having no definite meaning. That the word "perfect," when applied to Christ, must be taken in exactly the same sense as when applied to every believer (*e.g.*, Phil. iii. 12) will be very easily shown. The argumentative connection between v. 10 and v. 9, and, indeed, the very words used, is sufficient evidence that by "sufferings" in v. 10 the same thing is meant as by the "suffering of death," or the "tasting of death" in v. 9. Now, in v. 14 the immediate purpose of Christ's death is stated to be "that He might bring to nought (καταργήσῃ) him that had the power of death, that is, the devil"—a statement which must describe the effect as well as the purpose of Christ's death, and must be practically identical with the statement of v. 10, that the effect of Christ's sufferings was to perfect His own person ; that is to say, the sufferings or death of Christ must somehow have had the effect of perfecting His own person in and through bringing to nought the devil. *How* this combined result was brought about is evident from the nature of the case, and from such passages as

the following : “ Knowing this that our old man was crucified with [His old man], in order that the body of sin might be brought to nought (*καταργηθῇ*), that so we should no longer be enslaved to sin . . . knowing that Christ [our Exemplar], being raised from the dead, dieth no more [enslaved to sin] ; death no more hath mastery over Him [through sin] ; for in that He died, He died [enslaved] to sin for once, but in that He liveth, He liveth [enslaved] to God [for ever] ” (Rom. vi. 6, 9, 10). “ What the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God, having sent His own Son in the likeness of flesh of sin, and concerning sin, condemned [to death, and brought to nought in death], the sin in the flesh ” (viii. 3). “ That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, becoming conformed unto His death, if, by any means, I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead [as He has attained unto the resurrection from the dead]. Not that I have already obtained [the glory and honour which forms the prize of perfection (2 Tim. iv. 8 ; Heb. xii. 2)], or am already perfected [as He is already perfected] ” (Phil. iii. 10-12). “ In whom ye were also circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ ; having been buried with Him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with Him, through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead . . . [Christ who], having [in the putting off of the body of the flesh] put off from Himself the principalities and the powers [of evil], made a show of them openly, triumphing over them [and so bringing them to nought] ” (Col. ii. 11, 12, 15). These quotations prove beyond all doubt that Christ was perfected exactly as each believer is perfected by having His flesh, or old man, or body of sin brought to nought through death, while they show that the devil or the impersonation of the principle of sin, was brought to nought through the same means and in the same process. Believers attain to perfection by holding fast amid trial and suffering their boldness and the glorying of their hope firm unto the *end* (iii. 6), by holding fast the beginning of their assurance firm unto the *end* (v. 14), by being not sluggish, but imitators, of them who, through faith and endur-

ance, inherit the promises—showing the same diligence unto the fulness of the hope unto the *end* (vi. 11, 12)—the *end* (τέλος) in all these cases referring to the state of *perfection* (τελείωσις) or glorification. In other words, believers attain to perfection by carrying the life of faith or the course of believing obedience through to the end; by becoming obedient even unto death, yea, if need be, the death of the cross; even as Paul could say, “I have fought the good fight, I have *perfected* (τετέλεκα) the course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of [glory and honour due to] righteousness, which the Lord, the Righteous Judge, shall give me at that day” (2 Tim. iv. 6-8). Almost identical with this is the language of Heb. xii. 1, 2, where it is taught in so many words, that the perfect or glorified state is attained by the believer, *as it was attained by Jesus*, through a life-long course of faith and obedience, in spite of trial, suffering, and death. “Therefore, let us also, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking [for our example] to Jesus the Leader and *Perfecter* (τελειωτήν) of the [race of] faith, who, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and hath [in consequence] sat down at the right hand of the throne of God [crowned with glory and honour].” Elsewhere, too, Jesus is spoken of as “a Forerunner,” with reference to believers who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before them, and who are engaged in holding fast their hope unto the end (vi. 18-20). Surely, then, the proof is complete that the process of perfecting in the person of Christ is the same identical life-long process of putting off the old man and putting on the new, with which we are so familiar in the person of the believer, a process which is accomplished on its negative side, through suffering or dying, and on its positive side, through the operation of the Divine Spirit, appropriated and received by faith.

As to the positive side of the process of perfecting, little is said in the Epistle to the Hebrews. The author does not mention the fact that Christ, when He became incarnate,



“emptied Himself” (Phil. ii. 7). Nor does he say that when He again attained to the glorified state, He did so through being “filled unto all the fulness of God” (Col. i. 18, 19; Eph. iii. 19; iv. 12-16). But these things, though not expressly mentioned, are clearly implied in what the author says as to the way in which Jesus rose to perfection through a life-long course of believing obedience (v. 8; xii. 2.). It is through becoming partakers more and more of the Holy Ghost as the agent of renewal (vi. 4) that believers attain to their perfection or full growth (v. 14, *cf.* Eph. iv. 13), and such also must have been the means through which Jesus attained to “His perfection” (vi. 1), the path to which is everywhere represented as strictly parallel to that of believers (comp. the passages cited in last paragraph). Accordingly, both the historical indications and the language of the present epistle suggest, or rather imply, that Jesus, by the continued exercise of faith, became pervaded and filled and transformed more and more by the Spirit of God very much as believers do. And the nature of the case demands that, before there could be a *τελείωσις* or *πλήρωσις* on the part of Christ parallel to that of each believer, there should have been, as antecedent condition, a counterpart *κένωσις*. How far the *κένωσις* extended is stated neither by the present writer, nor by Paul, nor by any other New Testament writer; nor is the matter itself of much intrinsic importance in a practical point of view. In all probability there were points connected with the person of Christ as to which the apostles were quite as much in the dark as we ourselves are, and this is perhaps one of these. All that the author of Hebrews tells us is that, though Christ was tried in all respects like as we are, it was without His sinning (iv. 15), which must be held to imply that the Holy Ghost was present in altogether special fulness and power from the very beginning, so as to enable Him to overcome temptation. Christ was not, of course, “apart from sin” in the absolute sense during His life on earth, as if His flesh itself had not been sinful; but rather, God “made Him to be sin” by sending Him “in the likeness of flesh of sin”; and only when He is manifested a second time will he be manifested “apart from sin” to them that wait for Him unto

salvation (ix. 28). But He was "apart from sin" in the sense—defined by the context—that His divine nature, the "spirit of holiness," which He received from God, never yielded to the solicitations of His human nature, the "flesh of sin," which He received from the seed of David, and in the sense that the Spirit was present from the very first in such power as to keep the flesh in perfect subjection. The case of the believer differs in the lesser extent to which his faculties are filled and occupied with the Divine Spirit, and in the greater extent to which the flesh is permitted to fill and occupy them.

I hope it is now evident in what respect it was consonant to the character and government of God that Jesus should be made perfect through sufferings. The rule of the Divine justice, as revealed in the moral government of the world, is that "the wages of sin is death": Jesus was found wearing the nature of sinful humanity, having become a partaker of flesh and blood identical with that of which all other men partake: therefore it was meet that He, like other men, should suffer and die. In the midst of His sufferings He "delivered Himself over to Him that judgeth righteously," that is, to God, in order that He might do to Him whatever the manifestation of His righteous judgment should require; which was that He should first suffer and die, because of the sin He had taken upon Him, and then be crowned with glory and honour, because He had finished His course and kept the faith, and so attained to perfect righteousness (1 Pet. ii. 23, 24; Heb. xii. 1, 2). Just so the manifestation of the righteous judgment of God requires that it shall be in the case of each believer (1 Pet. iv. 13, 17; 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8).

It should also be observed that the only direct effect of the death of Christ was to perfect His own person, and satisfy the requirements of the Divine justice, in respect of His own person. The death of Jesus Christ produced no immediate effect on the person of any believer, nor did it in the least change, either for better or worse, the relation of any man to the Divine justice. This is evident, not only from the passage we are now examining, but from the whole tenor of Scripture, as well as from the facts of experience. For, not to mention that one half of the

human race had already entered the unchangeable state before the death of Christ took place, while the other half had not yet come into existence,—a fact which proves that in the nature of things the death of Christ could have no *immediate* or *direct* effect save on Himself and His contemporaries,—it is certain that no man is in the least changed, either in his own character or in his relation to the law and justice of God, till the time when he exercises faith in Christ. It is certain that before a single evil disposition can have been uprooted, or a single good disposition implanted, or a single transgression forgiven, and before the slightest modification can have been made in a man's relation to God, or (which is the same thing) in God's relation to him, the Holy Spirit must have been received, and must have begun to operate on the soul. Even in the case of the believer, complete and absolute deliverance from sin must precede complete and absolute reconciliation to God, or complete and absolute deliverance from the law or punitive justice of God; and much more is this true of the mere unbeliever. So long as Christ continued in connection with sin, so long the wrath or the avenging justice of God continued to lie upon Him and to inflict upon Him the penalty of death; and, in like manner, so long as each believer continues in connection with sin, so long does the same state of things continue to exist in his case that existed in the same circumstances in the case of Christ. It follows that the death of Christ could have produced no direct immediate effect on the race of mankind as a whole, or on the body of the elect as a whole. Nor could it have produced any direct immediate effect on the mind, or bearing, or disposition, or relation of God towards the race of mankind as a whole, or the body of the elect as a whole. In other words, the sole direct immediate effect of the death of Christ was to perfect His own person, and satisfy the requirements of the Divine justice in respect of His own person.

It must not of course be supposed that there is any definite proportion between the amount of Christ's sufferings and the amount of sin which he assumed. The New Testament writers have no idea that Christ assumed any definite amount of sin, any more than that He assumed a definite amount of flesh;

and they have just as little idea that He underwent a definite or measured amount of suffering. The amount of Christ's sufferings is simply the historical amount, of which the New Testament writers profess to have no more knowledge than ordinary readers or recipients of the historical traditions. All that the writer of our epistle professes to explain is the *cause* of Christ's sufferings in the constitution of His person, taken in connection with the principles of the Divine government; and their *effect* on His person and personal relation to God: the explanation of both which points was almost self-evident on the face of the historical facts. And in like manner the amount of "flesh of sin" which Christ assumed is simply the historical amount, which those who think the matter of sufficient consequence must seek from history or tradition. Christ became a sharer of flesh and blood, and flesh and blood as it now exists, and as He assumed it, is pervaded by the principle of sin, which was to Christ a source of temptation, and which drew upon Him the penalty of death; but the question as to how much sin pervades flesh and blood as such, how much sin every infant receives at its birth, and how much sin Christ received at the incarnation, is never thought of, much less discussed, by any of the writers of Scripture. Indeed, as it has no real practical bearing upon anything, only a fool would ever think of raising it.

If, again, it be asked how we are to conceive of the sin existing in Christ's flesh in its relation to the fulness of the Spirit dwelling in Him, we can only reply by pointing to the parallel case of the believer. The believer in his best and most spiritual states, when he is "full of faith and of the Holy Ghost," furnishes the closest analogy that can be obtained to what we must regard as the permanent state of Jesus Christ. Nor is the difference between the two cases so immeasurable that the one should be considered appreciably more conceivable or inconceivable than the other. When the believer is filled with the Spirit, his faculties are wholly dominated and determined by the Spirit's influence, the principle of sin inseparable from the flesh being in a state of complete quiescence, very much as if it had no existence. When the fulness of the Spirit has been withdrawn, the prin-



ciple of sin will again manifest its existence, and resume more or less of its sway. In the case of Christ, who received not the Spirit by measure (John iii. 34), and who, in consequence, did always the things that were well-pleasing to God (viii. 29), sin was never permitted to reign in His mortal body (v. 46); in other respects He was exactly like the believer. There is no more difficulty in the idea that the Divine Spirit should have been united to sinful flesh in the person of Christ than in the fact that the same Divine Spirit should be united to the same sinful flesh in the persons of all believers. There is even less difficulty in the former case than in the latter, where sin is sometimes, nay, oftentimes, permitted to reign and grieve the Holy Spirit of God. True, when all has been said that can be said, there still remains a degree of mystery in the person of Christ, but there is no evidence that the apostles probed that mystery to the bottom, any more than we ourselves, following the guiding lights which they have left us, can profess to do.

This brings us to the last great step in the process of salvation, as it is set forth in the paragraph before us, the step which theologians are accustomed to name the application, and to distinguish from the impetration, of redemption, and which is variously spoken of throughout these verses as benefiting every man (v. 9), leading many sons unto glory (v. 10), sanctifying (v. 11) or delivering all those who through fear of death are all their lifetime subject to bondage (v. 15), helping them that are being tried (v. 18). Objection might be taken to the terms application and impretation as not being by any means the most felicitous that might have been chosen to designate the two principal stages into which the work of salvation in general is here and elsewhere divided. It would be better and more appropriate to speak of salvation or redemption *in principle*, and salvation or redemption *in detail*, using the former to designate the moral-physical process of redemption as accomplished on the person of Christ, and the latter to designate the same identical process as accomplished on the persons of His followers. I say the same identical process. For there can be no question that as Christ, in respect of His humiliation, was "made in all things like unto His brethren" (v. 17),

so believers, in respect of their exaltation and glorification, are "conformed to the image of the Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren" (Rom. viii. 29), they are "crowned with glory and honour" in a manner identical with that in which Christ was "crowned with glory and honour." And that the course or succession of experiences through which believers are translated from the state of humiliation to the state of glorification is the same with that which we have just been describing as having been undergone by Christ, is manifest on the face of the believer's experience, as well as from numberless passages of Scripture, as has been already abundantly shown. The believer is led to glory, is adopted, is sanctified, is redeemed or delivered from bondage under sin, death, and the devil, in a life-long process of dying to sin and rising again to righteousness, through the power of the Divine grace or Spirit, received by faith in Jesus Christ. To quote particular texts in support of the central doctrine of the New Testament may almost be deemed superfluous. Besides, it would be difficult in the present connection to exhibit the full strength of the evidence, since the doctrine, though prominent enough in the Epistle to the Hebrews, as elsewhere, is couched for the most part in figurative Old Testament phraseology, fitted and intended to serve the ends of popular persuasion, but not those of lucid and easily intelligible exposition. The principal literal passages have been already quoted or referred to, though we may here again glance at one or two.

We have already seen that the sole immediate effect of the earthly experiences of Christ was to perfect His own person, and so to enable Him to enter heaven in our nature and on our behalf: whatever, therefore, He does in His capacity as "author of eternal salvation to all them that obey Him" (v: 9) must be done while in heaven, and as the indirect consequence of what He did while on earth. Now, the nature of the work which Christ does for believers, in His state of exaltation, if it were not perfectly well-known by itself, would at any rate be prescribed by the nature of believers' needs in their state of humiliation, and by the power of Christ in His present position to satisfy those needs. What are the be-

liever's needs during his life on earth? and how does the epistle represent Christ as satisfying them? The answer is already fully given in the closing verse of the paragraph: "In that He himself hath suffered, having been tried [while on earth], He is able [in heaven] to help them that are being tried [while on earth]." There is no doubt that the general function of helping the tried is meant to cover the whole of the heavenly work of Christ, just as its figurative counterpart, the function of expiating the sins of the people, is meant to cover the whole of the earthly work of the High Priest. The work of expiating the sins of the people is identical with the work of sanctifying the people (xiii. 12), and while the Jewish high priest sanctified the people of Israel by sprinkling the blood of a slaughtered goat on the Mercy-seat within the veil, Christ sanctifies believers by supplying the grace of His Holy Spirit to enable them to die to sin and rise again to righteousness after the example set by Himself. The two things, therefore, correspond exactly to one another, and that they are meant to do so is clear from the relation of v. 18 to v. 17, as indicated by the confirmative particle (*γάρ*) with which the latter verse opens. More detailed accounts of the process of individual salvation, and of the means by which it is carried through, are to be found in such passages as the following:—"Whose house are we, if we hold fast our boldness [of faith] and the glorying of our hope firm unto the end" (iii. 6). "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in falling away from the living God . . . for we are become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end" (vv. 12, 14). "Let us hold fast our confession [of faith]; for we have not an High Priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but one that hath been in all points tried like as we are without sinning; let us therefore draw near with boldness of faith unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in time of need" (iv. 14-16). "And we desire that each one of you may show the same diligence [as at the beginning] unto the fulness of the hope unto the end; that ye be not sluggish, but imitators of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

. . . We have a strong encouragement who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us; which we have as an anchor of soul, a hope both sure and steadfast, and entering into that which is within the veil; whither as a fore-runner Jesus entered on our behalf" (vi. 11, 12, 18-20). "Cast not away, therefore, your boldness of faith, which hath great recompence of reward; for ye have need of patience, that, having done the will of God, ye may receive the promise. For yet a very little while, and He that cometh shall come, and shall not tarry. But my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrink back, my soul hath no pleasure in him. But we are not of them that shrink back into perdition, but of them that have faith unto the saving of the soul" (x. 35-39). "And these all, having had witness borne to them [*scil.* that they were righteous] through their faith, received not the promise, God having provided some better thing concerning us, that they without us should not be made perfect. Therefore, let us also, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnessess, lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking [for an example] unto Jesus, the Leader and Perfecter of the [race of] faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (xi. 39—xii. 2). There can be no mistake, after statements so numerous and so unequivocal as these, that the whole Christian course, from "the beginning" onward to "the end," is a course of believing obedience, cherished and exercised in the midst of trial, in which the believer is sustained by constant supplies of the grace or Spirit of Christ, who, in so meeting the needs of his followers, approves Himself "the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey Him." The last passage, in particular, shows very clearly how true religion always has consisted and always must consist in precisely the same thing, viz., righteousness, obedience to the moral law, through faith in God—how this was what the Old Testament saints sought after, what Jesus sought after, and what every follower of Jesus must seek after—how trial, suffering, and death, must be undergone by all alike



before the state of perfection and glorification can be reached—how Jesus Himself was so far from being an exception to this rule, that, on the contrary, He was the most eminent and outstanding example of it—and how faith, appropriating the Divine Spirit, as it enabled Jesus, so it enabled every predecessor, and shall enable every follower of Jesus, to overcome trial, and pass triumphantly through death, and so to obtain “the crown of glory that fadeth not away.”

Not much is said in the Epistle to the Hebrews as to the cause of the believer's sufferings in the constitution of his person taken in connection with the principles of the Divine government, nor is there much reference to their effect on his person and personal relation to God, though it is, of course, implied that both their cause and their effect is precisely the same as in the case of Christ, who was made in all things—and therefore in this—like unto His brethren. The sufferings of the believer, like all the suffering that exists in the world, are the effect of sin and the wages of it, having been incurred through his becoming a partaker of flesh and blood, subject as it is to sin, and through sin to the devil, to whom the power of death is declared to belong. The sufferings of the believer manifest the Divine justice and vindicate the Divine character, by showing God as the righteous judge and the impartial governor of the world, who renders to every man according to his works, and therefore to believers, who partake of the same flesh and blood with Christ, sufferings so absolutely identical in nature with those of Christ that they are not only said to be after the same pattern, to serve the same end, and to supplement by forming part of the same whole, but are even spoken of once and again as “the sufferings of Christ”—as will be fully proved in another connection. The sufferings of the believer have likewise the effect of perfecting his own person in and through bringing to nought the devil or the principle of sin inherent in the flesh, this being the method of deliverance from slavery to sin and death; witness the statement of Paul, “Our old man was crucified with [His old man], in order that the body of sin might be brought to nought, that so we should no more be enslaved to sin [and through sin to death]” (Rom. vi. 6). Thus, the sufferings of the

believer, like those of Christ, are the (negative) instrument and condition of his glorification.

It is not meant that in the believer's case, any more than in Christ's, there is a definite proportion between the amount of suffering and the amount of sin to which it is due. The amount of each believer's sufferings is simply the historical amount, which differs greatly in individual cases, and is in no sort proportioned to the amount of sin committed. The mass of human sin is *forgiven* in the most absolute sense of the word. What, therefore, the writers of Scripture have got to do is not to speculate as to the abstract necessity of this or that amount of suffering, but to interpret the meaning of sufferings known from history and experience to exist. And they teach that the believer's sufferings are in themselves the wages of sin; that, in reference to God, they serve to manifest and vindicate His justice; and that, in reference to the sufferer himself, they are the means of perfecting his person, and working for him more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory; all these points, or at least the first two, being self-evident deductions from historical fact interpreted in the light of well understood general principles. Indeed, the Apostle Paul, when speaking of the believer's sufferings as manifesting the righteous judgment of God in the present, and preparing the way for glory in the future, appeals to the moral consciousness or common-sense of his readers in support of the interpretation which he puts upon them. They are, he says, "a means of manifesting the righteous judgment of God, *if it be [as I think you will be ready to grant that it is] a righteous thing for God,*" &c. (2 Thess. i. 4-7). So far as appears, therefore, the believer's experience, while on his way to glory, is in every respect the counterpart or copy of Christ's. But this particular part of the work of salvation will come up for more exhaustive treatment at a later stage.

Meanwhile, let us sum up the results of the foregoing discussion on the plan of salvation as it is viewed and presented by the writer to the Hebrews. The author teaches—(1.) that the natural state of man is a state of humiliation in flesh and blood, involving slavery or subjection to sin, the law,

death, and the devil ; (2.) that, with the view of delivering man from his natural state, and leading him to the state of glory destined for him, Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, assumed flesh and blood, thereby descending from a state of exaltation equal to that of God, to a state of humiliation equal to that of man, involving similar subjection to sin, the law, death, and the devil ; (3.) that Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God, by passing through a lifelong course of believing obedience, sustained by the grace or Spirit of God in the midst of trial, suffering, and death, rose to personal perfection and glorification, having satisfied the claims of the Divine justice on the one hand, and brought to nought His own flesh and blood on the other, thereby redeeming Himself from His assumed subjection to sin, the law, death, and the devil, and so becoming in due time the author of eternal redemption to all them that obey Him ; (4.) that all who exercise faith in God, by passing through a lifelong course similar in all respects to that of Christ—a course of believing obedience, in which they are sustained by the grace or Spirit of God in the midst of trial, suffering, and death—are raised to personal perfection and glorification, having satisfied the claims of the Divine justice on the one hand, and brought to nought their own flesh and blood on the other, being thereby eternally redeemed from their natural subjection to sin, the law, death, and the devil. Such being a general outline of the plan of salvation as it is conceived by the present writer, what could be more natural than that he should speak of Christ, who *led* (ἡγάγε) the way from the state of sin and humiliation to the state of righteousness and blessedness, and so obtained salvation in *principle* (ἀρχή) for all mankind, as the *Leader* (ἀρχηγός) of salvation ? The term is literally descriptive of the peculiar function of Jesus, the Saviour, as His office or function is apprehended and represented by our author. It does indeed seem to imply that Jesus was the first who ever trod the path of salvation, and that, until He opened the way, no one ever attained to righteousness and life in fellowship with God, or even had an opportunity of doing so ; and this, again, involves the startling conclusion that there was no true religion in the world till after the incarnation and death of

Christ. There is no doubt that not only the author of Hebrews, but the New Testament writers generally, tend so to think and speak of the history of religion in the world, connecting all true faith and life directly with the person of Christ as the "one mediator between God and men, Himself man," and relegating the whole of the pre-Christian religion of the world to the region of dead formalism. And not unnaturally; for *their* faith and life were directly connected with the person of Christ as the revelation of God to men, and, in that sense, the mediator between God and men; and the religion of *their contemporaries*, in so far as it was not identical with their own, was in reality dead formalism. Few, however, will be disposed to accept such ideas as valid, or to regard them in any other light than as an indication of the limitation of view under which the apostles laboured. Jesus Himself would certainly not have claimed to be the first who ever trod the path of life. He rather took special pains to emphasise the fact that He was only continuing the work that Moses and the prophets had begun; though it is true that He invited men to believe on Him, and follow Him, because that was the surest way of keeping the commandments of God, the necessary and unchangeable condition of entering into life. Possibly the tendency which the apostles manifest to magnify the place which Jesus occupied in the religious history of the world, so as to make it correspond with the place which He occupied in their experience, has affected their representations regarding His work to a greater extent than we are at first disposed to suspect or imagine. Anyhow, we must regard Jesus as the first of redeemed mankind not in a temporal but in an ideal sense, and it is in this sense that the designation, "Leader of salvation," is properly applicable to Him. "Leader of salvation" answers very closely to "firstborn among many brethren" (Rom. viii. 29), as the context clearly shows, and both designations are to be understood literally. Very different, as we shall see, is it with the other prominent designation applied to Jesus in the present paragraph, and throughout the Epistle, *High Priest* (*ἀρχιερεὺς*) of the New Covenant, which is not a literal designation chosen for the purpose of conveying an accurate idea of the functions



of the Saviour, but a figurative designation, transferred from the Jewish high priest, of whose *material* functions it is properly descriptive to Jesus Christ, of whose *spiritual* functions it conveys no more idea than a multitude of other terms that might easily be found—such as Shepherd, Sower, Bridegroom, &c.

## CHAPTER VI.

## FACT AND FIGURE IN THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

THE popular representation of the plan of salvation, contained in the Epistle to the Hebrews is very different from that which we have just drawn out. It may be briefly described by saying that it is based on taking the writer's figurative language literally, and his literal language figuratively. More exactly, it is the fruit of an attempt, necessarily unsuccessful, so to combine the writer's literal with his figurative representations as to construct out of the two a single harmonious representation. Starting from the position that Christ is a literal "High Priest," whose principal function consists in "expiating the sins of the people," its advocates maintain that the greatest part (consistency requires that it should be the *whole*) of the work of redeeming or saving the world, or, as some would prefer to say, the elect, is of the nature of an "atonement," which Christ made in His official capacity, by offering Himself as a literal sacrifice in the act of His own death. Some such view as this is thought to be established beyond possibility of doubt or cavil by a host of statements scattered throughout the epistle, of which the following may be taken as specimens. We read, that the Son, "having made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (i. 3); that "it behoved Him in all things to be made like unto His brethren, that He might become a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, with a view to expiating the sins of the people" (ii. 17); that "every high priest, being taken from among men, is appointed for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins; who can bear

gently with the ignorant and erring, for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity, and by reason thereof is bound, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins ; and no man taketh this honour unto himself, but when he is called of God, even as was Aaron : so Christ also glorified not Himself to be made an High Priest," &c. (v. 1-5) ; that " a High Priest became us . . . who needeth not daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins, and then for the people's ; for this He did once for all, when He offered up Himself " (vii. 26, 27) ; that " we have such an High Priest, who sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens ; a Minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man ; for every high-priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices, wherefore it is necessary that this High Priest also have somewhat to offer " (viii. 1-3) ; that " Christ, having come an High Priest of the good things to come, through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation, nor yet through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood entered in once for all into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption :—for if the blood of goats and bulls, and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling them that have been defiled, sanctify unto the purity of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without blemish unto God, purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God " (ix. 11-13) ; that " Christ entered not into a holy place made with hands, like in pattern to the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear before the face of God for us ; nor yet that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place, year by year, with blood not his own, else must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world : but now, once at the end of the ages, hath He been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself ; and, inasmuch, as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this cometh judgment, so Christ, also, was once offered to bear away the sins of many " (vv. 24-28) ; that " we have been sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all ; and every high priest, indeed, standeth day by day

ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, the which can never take away sins, but He, when He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God . . . for by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (x. 10-14); and finally that "Jesus, also, in order that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate" (xiii. 12).

The meaning of such statements appears to be unmistakable. The "sins" of which Christ made purification (i. 3), for which He offered (v. 3 ; vii. 27 ; x. 12), which He took away (x. 4, 11), the "sins of the people," which He expiated (ii. 17), the "sins of many," which He was offered to bear away (ix. 28), the "sins" which He nullified or did away (v. 26)—must be the aggregate sins of all whom Christ saves. How can these be said to be purified or expiated, borne away or done away, by the offering of Christ? The answer of theologians is somewhat as follows:—In every sacrifice the victim is the strict substitute of the party or parties on whose behalf it is offered. The sins of the offerer become the sins of the victim, and the death of the victim becomes the death of the offerer. When the Jewish high priest offered the people's goat, the sins of the whole people are thought to have been transferred to the goat, and their penalty to have fallen upon him, instead of falling upon them, the consequence being that while the goat died the people escaped death on account of their sins; and, in like manner, when Jesus offered Himself, the sins of the whole body of believers are thought to have been transferred to Him, and their penalty to have fallen upon Him, instead of falling upon them, the consequence being that while Jesus died believers escape death on account of their sins. Since, however, it is quite impossible that sin, strictly so-called, should be transferred from one party to another, it is only the *guilt*, or legal consequence, or penalty of sin that is thought to be laid on the victim sacrificed, and it is this that Christ is conceived to have expiated, and, in so doing, put for ever away in the act of His death. In this way a serious difficulty seems to be got rid of. For as the sins of a great part of the human race had not even been committed at the time when Christ died, it were absurd to suppose that these



had been purified and put away, in the strict sense, centuries before they had come into existence. The amount of guilt transferred to Christ, being that of the whole body of believers from the foundation of the world to its consummation, is so great that the penalty requiring to be exacted is practically infinite : at any rate, the Divine dignity of the victim confers on the sacrifice of Christ infinite expiatory value ; so that the merits of a sacrifice *intended* only for the elect can be *offered* to all men without exception ! And since the proper penalty of sin is death, in the sense not of utter extinction, nor yet of mere separation between soul and body, but of suffering indefinitely prolonged, that which was properly expiatory in the death of Christ was the *suffering* connected with it—which, accordingly, is the thing supposed to be transferred to believers.

Such, in rude outline, is the famous doctrine of “the atonement,” with which we are so familiar, which occupies so large a place in the current systems of theology, which has been so persistently dinned into our ears from infancy, and is so constantly represented as the central, most fundamental, and most important doctrine of revealed religion, as the prop and pillar of the whole evangelical system, without which salvation would be absolutely impossible, the sure and at the same time the sole foundation of the faith and hope of all Christians. To its more enthusiastic advocates the doctrine must appear *satisfactory* in more senses than one, as it is in their opinion “utterly indisputable ;” and the ordinary *believing* reader, who has never taken the trouble to reflect on the subject, will perhaps be surprised at the mention of but a few of the many enormous difficulties which it involves.

There is not a little difference of opinion even among competent authorities as to the precise nature and meaning of a Jewish expiatory sacrifice, but one or two things about it are clear enough. For example, it is quite certain that the effect, whatever it might be, which the offerer sought to produce was produced at once in the act of offering, and not in a subsequent act, or at a later time. On the great day of atonement, as soon as the goat was offered by the high priest, the whole people were sanctified, so far, at least, as the offering of such

a sacrifice could sanctify them. "And there shall be no one in the tent of meeting when he goeth in to make atonement in the holy place, until he come out and *have made atonement* for himself and for his household and *for all the assembly of Israel*" (Lev. xvi. 17). It is evident from these words that whatever was done in the way of atoning or sanctifying the people during the current year was done after the high priest entered and before he again came out from the holy place. It is also evident that the effect was produced directly, and on the whole people at once. If the death of the goat, with the sprinkling of the blood so provided, was the (symbolic) means of removing the people's *guilt*, which had been (symbolically) transferred to the goat before it was slain, then the act of offering the goat and the act of removing the people's guilt were one and the same; in the instant that the goat was offered the guilt of the whole people was removed, and they were atoned, purified, or sanctified from guilt. If, on the other hand (as is most probable), the death of the goat, with the sprinkling of the blood, was the (symbolic) means of removing the people's *sin*, and consecrating their life to God, then the act of slaying and offering the goat, and the act of removing the people's sin and consecrating their life to God were one and the same; in the instant that the first took place the second likewise took place, and the whole people were atoned, purified, or sanctified from sin. There is no trace of a counter imputation of the entire atoning merit of the goat to each individual of the people, nor of bringing its merit to bear upon any but such as were then living and present in the vicinity of the tabernacle. Each generation of Israelites had its own atonement, or series of atonements, at which they were present as worshippers and offerers, and of whose benefits they were partakers. No one generation was either required or permitted to make an atonement on behalf of any other. The atonement of one year was not even available for the following year, though the worshippers on both occasions might be exactly the same. Nor were different individuals ever atoned for separately by means of the same sacrifice. Indeed, the nature of the ceremony evidently precludes any such thing. If either the guilt or the sin of the

*whole people* was (symbolically) transferred to the goat in order to be expiated upon him, how preposterous would it have been to require that the entire atoning merit of the goat should be in turn transferred to *each individual* of the people, instead of allowing it to take effect directly on the whole people together ! Further, not only is there no such thing as obedience on the part of the victim sacrificed, but there is hardly a trace even of suffering ; for as the victim was doubtless slain instantaneously, and in the most humane manner possible, the suffering attending its death would thus be reduced to a minimum. In fact, there is reason to believe that the death was by no means the principal part of the rite of sacrifice, but rather the offering of the blood or life, to which the death was a mere—though an essential—preliminary. The absence of any such thing as obedience was a necessary consequence of the fact that the victim was always a brute creature, incapable from its very nature of intelligent obedience, while the priest and the victim were always totally distinct from each other. Again, while the animal really and truly suffered death, the people in whose stead it is supposed to have been offered really and truly escaped death. Once more, it does not appear that the sanctification which was accomplished (symbolically) by a Jewish sacrifice was ever thought of as incomplete, and requiring to be supplemented by something else,—as forming the basis, and so preparing the way, for another sanctification of an entirely different kind, which was needful before the people could enter into fellowship with God, and which was brought about by totally different means. On the contrary, the holiness which was (symbolically) communicated in the act of atonement was holiness identical in nature with that of God Himself,—holiness fitted to establish fellowship between God and His people,—being the only holiness known to Old Testament times, the only holiness which would have been of the slightest value, the only holiness which the people either required or could possibly obtain.

Such, then, are some of the leading features of what was confessedly a proper atoning sacrifice. But what of the so-called atoning sacrifice of Christ ? Does it correspond, in the

above outstanding particulars, with the sacrifice offered by the Jewish high priest on behalf of the Jewish people? Is it not rather totally different, and necessarily so from the very nature of the case? In the first place, the victim is here identical with the high priest. There is no such thing as sprinkling the blood, nor indeed is there any altar to sprinkle it upon. The atoning element lies not in the blood, but in the sufferings, and these are admittedly life long, and are supposed to be somehow proportioned to the amount of sin transferred to the victim. In the second place, the people, instead of being present as parties directly interested, and to be directly affected by the act of offering, are scattered throughout all nations, and along the whole line of the world's history; one half had already entered the unchangeable state before the death of Christ took place, while the other half had not yet come into existence; the consequence being that the sins of the one half had already been done away, while the sins of the other half had not yet been committed. It is, therefore, quite impossible that Christ should have made an atonement for the whole body of the elect by the act of His own death, similar to that which the Jewish high priest is acknowledged to have made for the whole people of Israel by the act of offering the goat. Theologians dare not pretend that He did or could do so. And since the death of Christ could produce no direct effect on the body of the elect as a whole, obviously it can have produced no direct effect on any part of that body, so that whatever effect it produces must be produced in an indirect or round-about manner, that is, in a manner entirely different from that in which the effect of the Jewish sacrifice was produced. Accordingly, it is alleged that the aim or object of Christ's death—at least, its *immediate* object—was not the removal of sin, but merely of guilt; that the guilt of the elect, and that alone, was transferred to Christ—a thing which is supposed to be perfectly possible in spite of the fact that a large part of said guilt had not yet been incurred; and that the death of Christ was merely a step in the direction of atoning, purifying, or sanctifying the body of the elect from guilt. Still, there *is* a sanctification from sin, which, though it was not the primary object contemplated in



the death of Christ, was yet a secondary object, and flows from it as an indirect consequence. This implies that each member of the elect must undergo in succession two distinct sanctifications, first a preparatory sanctification from the guilt of sin, and then a supplementary sanctification from the sin itself. The first of these is regarded as the essential condition and basis of the second, and, from all that one can gather, is conceived to take place in a single act, simultaneous with the initial act of faith on the part of each member of the elect, though how it can be supposed to do so in view of the fact that believers continue to incur guilt, more or less, and to have it removed, during their whole earthly life, is certainly not apparent. The direct means by which this preliminary purification or sanctification is effected is the imputation or transference to *each believer* of the lifelong sufferings of the victim-high-priest, along with the said victim-high-priest's lifelong obedience, that is, of the entire atoning merit of the victim, along with something which is perhaps not to be regarded as atoning merit, though it must be supposed to possess equal merit of another kind:—this, notwithstanding the fact that the atoning merit of the victim is deemed adequate to expiate the guilt, not merely of *the whole body of the elect*, but even of *the whole human race*! The second subsidiary purification follows the first, and springs out of it. It is a lifelong moral or spiritual process, carried out, on the one hand, through the continued operation of the Holy Ghost received by faith—that is to say, by the same means and in the same manner with that in which the victim-high-priest's obedience was carried out—and, on the other hand, by means of sufferings and death on the part of the individual to all appearance quite identical with those which he is supposed to have escaped on the ground of the victim-high-priest's sufferings and death!

Now, not to dwell on the curious, clumsy, incongruous character of such a method of atonement in contrast to the simple and natural Jewish method, where is the evidence by which it is supported in the language of the epistle? What ground is there to think that whenever the writer to the Hebrews speaks of the purifying or putting away of sin by

Christ, he refers not to sin itself but merely to the guilt of sin? How do we know that the guilt of all the elect was imputed or transferred to Christ? Where does the writer say a single word about such a thing? Will it be alleged that the imputation of guilt from the offerer to the victim is involved in the very idea of a sacrifice? But at any rate, in the case of a Jewish sacrifice, the parties whose guilt is supposed to have been transferred to the goat were present then and there confessing their guilt, and seeking to have it removed, whereas, in the case of Christ, a great part of the guilt had not even been incurred, and therefore could not be confessed. Waiving this, however, what evidence is there to support the idea of a subsequent counter-imputation of the whole atoning merit of Christ to each individual believer in the first moment of faith? Why should such a counter-imputation be needed, if the guilt of all the elect was transferred to Christ in the way that the guilt of the whole people of Israel is supposed to have been transferred to the goat? Moreover, how comes it that believers are still found guilty, and requiring forgiveness, not only after the sum-total of their guilt has been transferred to Christ and expiated upon Him, but even after the sum-total of Christ's atoning merit, sufficient though it be to expiate the guilt of the whole world, has been transferred to them individually? Above all, where shall we find the slightest indication that the writer to the Hebrews held the necessity of two successive sanctifications or purifications, the one from guilt, the other from sin, before the believer could enter heaven or enjoy the fellowship of God?

It will not be necessary to enter at length into each of these questions for the purpose of showing that the views of theologians on the points raised are wholly destitute of authority. A single text will suffice to prove that the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews is in no degree responsible for the absurdly incongruous theory of atonement above described. In chapter x. 14 it is said that "by one offering He [Jesus] hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." Jesus Himself was "perfected for evermore" (vii. 28), when, having passed through death (v. 9), He was "separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens" (vii. 26); in other words,

when He attained to the glorified state in heaven (ii. 10). And so the "spirits of righteous men have been perfected" (xii. 23), when, they have run the same race of faith which Jesus ran to the end (xi. 40 ; xii. 1, 2 ; vi. 11, 12), and have reached the same heavenly glorified state (ii. 8-10), which, in their case as well as His, is the outcome and crown of sanctification (v. 11). It is clear, therefore, that when Christ is said by His one offering to have perfected for ever them that are sanctified, His sacrificial work is conceived to have covered the entire process of salvation from its inception to its completion, and that too as regards the whole body of the saved ; He is thought of, and represented as having sanctified, not from guilt merely, but from sin itself, all who ever have been or shall be sanctified, and so to have placed them by the act of His death in the heavenly, glorified, or perfected state. In other words, the work of Christ in sanctifying the whole body of the elect, as it is expressed in the same phraseology, so it is represented under precisely the same form, as the work of the Jewish high priest in sanctifying the whole body of the people of Israel. But since it is utterly impossible in the nature of things that the sanctification of the elect should have been effected through the act of offering a sacrificial victim, as the sanctification of the people of Israel was effected through the act of offering the goat ; since experience completely refutes the idea that the sanctification of the elect did, or does, as a matter of fact, so take place : this manner of speech can only be regarded as a highly artificial mould or figurative form, into which the writer throws his ideas, for the purpose of commending them to his Jewish readers ; and this is what we mean by saying that Christ is a figurative, not a literal high priest, and His work a figurative, not a literal, expiatory sacrifice. It follows that in order to gain a literally accurate view of the fundamental ideas underlying the epistle, we must break through the Jewish shell, in which they are here incased ; but this must be done, not as theologians have done it, by proceeding, with wanton arbitrariness, to shape, and mangle, and mutilate the writer's beautiful and harmonious figurative conception drawn from the Old Testament, so as to give it the air of a literal conception, but

rather, as we ourselves have essayed to do it, by collecting the main outlines of the plan of salvation from the literal passages scattered throughout the epistle, and then using the facts thus ascertained as a means of testing and setting aside the figurative forms, by which they were rendered acceptable to Jewish readers of the first century. The theological doctrine of "the atonement" is the outcome of an abortive attempt to modify a purely figurative representation of the plan of salvation, so as to manufacture out of it something in the nature of a literal representation. In spite, therefore, of the immense importance commonly attached to it, this "fundamental doctrine of revealed religion" can only be looked upon as a portentous monstrosity, the offspring of an illit union between literal fact and oratorical fancy. We say this deliberately, and in the full consciousness that we are characterising a doctrine which is held, with slight modifications, by the Church universal—Greek, Latin, and Protestant. The one indisputable fact, which is not more clearly confirmed by universal Christian experience than it is distinctly taught in every part of Scripture, that believers are never completely freed from guilt until they have been completely freed from sin, is of itself enough to prove how baseless is the idea that there is a sanctification from guilt separate from, and preparatory to, sanctification from sin.

Possibly, it may occur to the reader, as a difficulty, that if the whole of the Old Testament phraseology contained in the Epistle to the Hebrews is to be taken in a figurative sense, nine-tenths of the writer's doctrinal teaching will, in that case, be presented in figure, and only the merest snatches in plain language. This, I say, may appear a difficulty; for there is no doubt that, if we take up any ordinary didactic composition, we shall find that the amount of figurative language is very small in proportion to the amount of literal. However, it has been already observed, and may be again repeated, that the Epistle to the Hebrews is not a plain didactic discourse, but a highly-wrought persuasive discourse, adapted to the special circumstances of the time in which, and the parties to which, it was written—a fact that is amply sufficient to account for its peculiar character. The aim of the writer is not to com-



municate the elements of the plan of salvation to readers wholly in ignorance of them. He expressly declines to speak upon first principles, on the ground that his readers ought, at any rate, to be fully acquainted with them (vi. 1, *seq.*). The plan of salvation, through faith in the crucified Jesus, whose Spirit was given to renew or redeem all who obeyed Him, was of itself so easy to understand, and had been so fully proclaimed, at an earlier stage, to the Hebrew Christians, that it could now be taken for granted as something about which there could not possibly be any dispute. What, therefore, the writer had specially to concern himself about was not to explain the Gospel scheme of salvation, but to *persuade Jewish readers to hold it fast*, who were by nature strongly prejudiced against it, and in favour of the law scheme of salvation. This, which was a much more difficult task, the author endeavours to accomplish by clothing the Gospel in the garb of the ritual law, by arraying it, so to speak, in ritual swaddling bands, and palming it off as the true child of a ritual parent. Whether by these means the author succeeded in the object he had in view,—viz., in giving to the Gospel a more winsome outward aspect in the eyes of his original readers, may be open to doubt; but there is no doubt whatever that he has succeeded in an object which he assuredly had not in view,—viz., in convincing the mass of his modern readers that the Gospel, in its inner essence, is something entirely different from what he, and every one else in apostolic times, understood it to be.

That any one who had ever apprehended the Gospel scheme of salvation in its native simplicity should dream of taking the writer's Old Testament language in a literal sense must be considered impossible. The Hebrews could not have done so. Even modern theologians, who have never apprehended the Gospel scheme of salvation in its native simplicity, are far enough from pretending that the writer is speaking literally throughout. They select only the merest fragments of a vast and complicated figurative system, modify and piece them together after a fashion of their own, and then allege that the system which they have called into existence is a literal system; and it is strange that they are able to delude them-

selves even so far as this. When the author speaks of that process of deliverance from sin of which Christ is the author to all them that obey Him—which is elsewhere spoken of as a salvation (ii. 10 ; v. 10), a glorification or leading unto glory (ii. 10), a sanctification (v. 11), an adoption or leading as sons unto glory (v. 10), a purification (ix. 14), a perfecting (x. 14), a renewal unto repentance (vi. 6)—as an “expiating the sins of the people” after the manner of “a high priest,” the language is manifestly to be understood in a purely figurative or secondary sense. It is quite impossible in the nature of things that the words should bear anything like a literal signification. The Old Covenant, in the very highest view of it, or at any rate in the view which our author adopts, dealt in outward, earthly, physical symbols : the New Covenant deals in inward, heavenly, spiritual realities : and it is a palpable impossibility that a piece of physical symbolism should convey a literally accurate idea, or indeed anything beyond the remotest suggestion, of a moral or spiritual process. The expressions “seed of Abraham,” “the people,” “high priest,” “expiate” (ii. 16, 17), are all borrowed expressions. They have not been framed by the present writer for the purpose of conveying his ideas in a literal and simple manner. The primary and proper application of all of these terms is to the persons, functions, and processes of the Old Covenant, and they are here completely diverted from their original reference, and applied to persons, functions, and processes of which they can from the nature of the case convey only the faintest conception. Who, for example, could divine *à priori* that the expression “seed of Abraham” was a name for “every man” (v. 9), for “all those who through the fear of death are all their lifetime subject to bondage” (v. 15)—who, as being sharers of flesh and blood, in contrast to angels or pure spirits, are in bondage under sin, death, the law, the devil—or, at the least, a name for “all them that obey” or believe on Jesus Christ (v. 9) ? And, again, who could tell from the word itself that “the people” referred neither to the Jewish people, nor to the Greek people, nor to any people in particular, but to all men, or at least to all believers ? So, when the word high priest is used, who would have thought that the leading function of

the individual so named was not to offer slain animals on altars of gold or brass or stone, nor to sprinkle blood upon people or places or utensils, but to endure lifelong suffering and death in his own person through the power of Divine grace (ii. 9), of an eternal Spirit (ix. 14), and then by communicating that grace (iv. 16) or Spirit of grace (vi. 4 ; x. 29) to all them that obey Him (v. 9, 10), to enable them to endure the like lifelong suffering and death (ii. 18)? In fact, the writer expressly says that the use of such language to describe moral, spiritual, or heavenly things is *figurative* (ἀντίτυπος, ix. 24), that the proper application of the terms he employs is not to *the very things* (αὐτὴν τὴν εἰκόνα τῶν πραγμάτων, x. 1) of which he speaks, but to earthly copies or *symbols* (ὑποδείγματα, ix. 23), or *shadows* (σκιὰ, x. 1) of them; in short, that when he clothes his ideas in such words, he is uttering a *parable* (παραβολή, ix. 9). Christ is a “high priest” in the same sense that He is a “sower,” a “shepherd,” a “householder.” All men are “the seed of Abraham,” or “the people [of Israel],” in the same sense that they are “ground,” or “sheep,” or “day-labourers.” The Spirit of Christ, given to believers as the moral outcome of His incarnation and death, is “blood,” in the same sense that the Word of Christ proclaimed to the world is “seed.” The Spirit’s work, in renewing the hearts of men, is a “sprinkling” on them of blood in the same sense that it is a “sowing” into them of seed. The work of Christ in saving the world is “offering a sacrifice to expiate the sins of the people” in the capacity of a high priest in the same sense that it is “marrying a wife” in the capacity of bridegroom, or “building a house” in the capacity of an architect. In each and all of these cases there is a certain analogy or resemblance between something that is outward, earthly, physical, and something that is inward, heavenly, spiritual, in virtue of which the latter comes to be spoken of in terms of the former. By the author’s own admission and express statement, the Old Covenant contained nothing more than visible, earthly representations of the invisible, heavenly things that constitute the blessings of the New Covenant. And we may find reason to think that to say this much was saying more than enough, for it will appear by-

and-by that there is room to doubt whether the law had so much as "a *shadow* of the good things to come" (x. 1), whether between even *the ritual portion of the law* and the spiritual realities of the Gospel there is anything more than that merely accidental resemblance which lies at the basis of the parables of our Lord.

Here, perhaps, we might stop, and allow the reader to draw off for himself the figurative husk under which the writer's ideas are presented, and by which they are disguised, were it not that a detailed attempt to distinguish throughout the epistle between literal fact and figurative form will reveal many points of curious interest as well as great importance. There is, in truth, no more instructive piece of writing in the New Testament than the present epistle, which furnishes perhaps the most conclusive and convincing evidence that will be found anywhere of the utter worthlessness of apostolic exegesis, except as illustrating the method of exegesis current in the Jewish schools of the time, and *received* by the apostles, as by every one else. We are thus taught incidentally that the inspiration of the New Testament writers was not *plenary* or *universal*—extending, that is, to all matters whatever which they speak about—but *partial* or *special*, being limited to securing the accurate communication of that plan of salvation which they had so profoundly experienced, and which they were commissioned to proclaim. In all other matters, and particularly in matters of Old Testament interpretation—which is used to illustrate and enforce, but never to *prove* (in the strict sense) the method of salvation—the New Testament writers are simply on a level with their contemporaries. Happily the validity of the plan of salvation may be verified by experience in the present time as really, if not always so vividly and distinctly, as it was in the experience of the apostles, so that even within this narrow circle we are not wholly dependent on special inspiration. We may accept the testimony of apostles and prophets, when detailing their religious experiences, without inquiring whether or not they were specially inspired in giving it; and we may do the same in the case of our own contemporaries; whilst the testimony in favour of the incarnation, the life history, and the resur-



rection of Jesus Christ, would be weakened rather than strengthened by the assumption that the bearers of it were specially inspired, as there might in that case be some suspicion of visionary illusion, transforming what were merely impressions of the spirit into impressions of sense.

To proceed, then, with our investigation. The author of Hebrews, in seeking to commend the Gospel scheme of salvation to the continued acceptance of his readers, has been led by the exigencies of his argument to connect it in a very special manner with the person of the Saviour. The process by which the world is saved is viewed and presented, not so much in itself, as in its relation to the Saviour, as a function which He discharges in a peculiar official capacity. The whole economy of redemption is suspended upon the person and personal functions of Him who is its central figure, and whose character determines its character. In other words, *the priesthood of Christ* occupies a very prominent place in almost every part of the epistle.

That the designation "great priest" (x. 21), as applied to Christ, is figurative might almost be taken for granted, as being clearly involved in the correlative and complementary figurative expression "over the house of God." The original application of this latter expression was to the Mosaic tabernacle, and to the people of Israel, as the inmates or worshippers connected with that tabernacle; the secondary or figurative application is to heaven, and to believers as the inmates and worshippers connected with heaven. In the original earthly house the head or overseer was Moses (iii. 2, *seq.*), who was succeeded in that capacity by the high-priest; in the figurative house of God the head or overseer is Jesus (iii. 1).

In saying that the Mosaic tabernacle was the literal house of God, while heaven is the figurative, little more is meant than that the latter is very different from the former, as different as the figurative meaning of a term usually is from the literal. Some might prefer to reverse the application of terms, holding that heaven is the literal house of God, of which the Mosaic tabernacle was merely a figure or earthly copy. And to this there is no very serious objection. The two words which our author makes use of to indicate the

two things are the words *type* (τύπος) and *antitype* (ἀντίτυπος). The type has some sort of resemblance to the antitype, just as the figurative meaning of a term has some sort of resemblance to the literal; yet the type usually differs widely from the antitype, as the figurative meaning of a term usually differs widely from the literal. No one would think of confounding the physical with the metaphysical meaning of the word *long-headed*. The two meanings are totally different. Nor would the difference be a whit diminished by calling the metaphysical meaning the literal and the physical the figurative. Just so it is with the physical and the spiritual meanings of the expression "house of God." In the one case the words signify a material building such as is usually denominated a house; in the other a spiritual relationship: two things which are totally different, and the difference between which remains in its full extent whichever of them we prefer to call figurative. On the one hand it might be urged that the tabernacle was only a secondary copy of which heaven was the primary original,—which is no doubt the view of the present writer (viii. 5); and, therefore, since the proper or literal meaning of a word is usually the original one, it might be thought more correct to call heaven the literal house of God, and the Mosaic tabernacle the figurative. Over against this, however, is to be set the fact that the tabernacle was actually a house in the proper sense of the word, whereas heaven is not a house at all in the proper sense, but a spiritual relationship. Hence, to avoid confusion and collision with common usage, it is best to speak of the things on earth, copies though they be, as literal, and of the things in heaven as figurative.

Precisely the same remarks that apply to the expression "house of God," as a name for heaven, apply in an equal degree to the word "priest," as a designation of Christ. Some writers have foolishly imagined that they were scoring a splendid point against the advocates of a figurative priesthood on the part of Christ by alleging, after the author of our epistle, that the priests of the Old Covenant were mere figures or copies, and that if Christ were not a literal priest there never could have been a literal priest at all. But—not to

call in question the typological doctrine itself—what is meant when we affirm that the priesthood of Christ was figurative and not literal, is simply that the character and functions of Christ, as the author of human salvation, differ widely from the character and functions of ordinary heathen or Jewish priests—as widely as the figurative meaning of a term usually differs from the literal. And this difference is not in the least affected by the manner in which we may choose to express it. In modern usage it is customary to speak of the Old Covenant priests and offerings and places of worship as types of which the counterpart spiritual things are antitypes; the usage of the writer to the Hebrews—a usage which is determined by the view which he takes of the passage quoted at viii. 5—is just the reverse, for with him the heavenly things are types of which the earthly are antitypes (ix. 24); but who will pretend that the tabernacle, for instance, is either more or less like heaven according as we call it the type of which heaven is the antitype or the antitype of which heaven is the type? Similarly, the character and functions of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, are not either more or less like those of Moses, Aaron, or Melchizedek, because we decline to describe the one as literal, the other as figurative. No one, therefore, would insist on applying the epithet “figurative” to the priesthood of Christ, if the distinction between it and the priesthood of the Old Covenant could be as well or better expressed in some other way. But though the term employed is of little moment in itself, it is of great moment that one should be clearly understood. And in common speech the word priest is used to designate a person who officiates at an altar by offering slain animals or other material gifts to conciliate the favour or to avert the displeasure of the Deity. This is, in common parlance, the proper literal signification of the word. And if the work of Christ, in redeeming the human race from under the power of sin and Satan, be something entirely different from the offering of slain victims on an altar to conciliate the favour or to avert the displeasure of the Deity, then we are perfectly justified in describing Him not as a literal but as a figurative priest.

When it is said that Jesus is a “great priest over the house

of God," it is not quite clear what priestly function is chiefly in view,—whether that belonging to the ordinary high priest as the religious head of the people,—or that belonging specially to Moses as the mediator of the covenant, and leader of the people into the land of promised rest,—or that belonging to Melchizedek as a king-priest, glorious and exalted, superior to the fluctuations of time and sense,—or whether all these are thought of as combined into one. The same expression, "house of God," occurs once and again in chap. iii., and this might suggest that the writer, though he speaks of Christ as a "great priest," is not thinking of Him as exercising any specific priestly function, but rather a general function corresponding to that of Moses as commissioned (ἀπόστολος, iii. 1) leader of the people to the promised inheritance. The expression "great priest" itself is general and indefinite, for it is neither mediator, nor Melchizedek-priest, nor high priest, nor simply priest, though Jesus in the course of the epistle is compared to all of these; and it may have been purposely chosen to cover every form of priesthood, as affording a representation more or less close of the functions of Christ, and to include, besides, the function of Moses as leader of the people. It is certain, at any rate, that Jesus is compared to Moses, while heaven is compared, or rather identified, with the rest held forth to Israel at the exodus (iii. and iv. *passim*); that He is also compared to Moses, while the process by which believers are fitted to enter heaven is compared to the ceremony by which the Sinaitic covenant was inaugurated, and heaven itself to the land of Canaan as the inheritance attached by promise to the covenant (ix. 15, 18-20); that He is again compared to Moses, while the process of entering heaven is compared to the formation of a covenant similar to the Sinaitic, though made at a mountain like Zion instead of at one like Sinai, and while heaven itself is compared to a city like Jerusalem instead of to a land like Canaan (xii. 18-25); that He is compared to Melchizedek by being regarded and spoken of as a priest after the order of Melchizedek (vii. *passim*); that He is compared to the Aaronic high priest, while heaven is compared to the most holy place of the Mosaic tabernacle (ix. 1-14, &c.); and that He is compared to the Levitical priests



generally, while heaven is compared to the Mosaic tabernacle as a whole (viii., *passim*; x. 1-18). Christ is spoken of as a priest, as a high priest, as a priest after the order of Melchizedek, as the Mediator of a Covenant, and as the commissioned Leader of a people to rest. There must, therefore, be a sense in which He is all of these at the same time. That when He resembles them all, He can resemble none of them closely is self-evident. Which of them He resembles most cannot be determined *à priori*.

There is no doubt that the *leading* priestly figure with whom the author wishes to compare Jesus is the Aaronic high priest (including Moses) rather than Melchizedek. This might be taken for granted as flowing from the fundamental antithesis between law and Gospel that runs through the whole epistle. Melchizedek had no connection with the law. The Aaronic high priest had. It appears, at any rate, from the fact that the author speaks again and again of Jesus as a high priest (ii. 17; iii. 1; iv. 14, 15; v. 1), and even expressly compares Him to Aaron (v. 4), before he has made any reference to Melchizedek, who was not a high priest at all, but merely a priest; while, on the other hand, as soon as the discussion devoted to Melchizedek has been concluded, he returns (vii. 26) to his former idea of the high priesthood as distinguished from the Melchizedek priesthood of Christ, and keeps to this idea to the close of the epistle. Indeed, it may be observed that viii. 3 is an explicit resumption of the thread broken off at v. 1-4, where Melchizedek is first introduced.

Why, then, does the author refer to Melchizedek at all? The answer to this question can be very distinctly given, and should be carefully noted, as it will throw considerable light on the whole texture of the epistle, besides clearing up one or two moot-points that have greatly perplexed and divided the commentators. When the author wishes, in the broadest way, to compare the old or Sinaitic to the new or Christian dispensation, we shall find that he bases his comparison on two Old Testament passages, one from Exodus xxv. 40, and the other from Jeremiah xxxi. 31, *seq.*, which he interprets in his own peculiar fashion, so as to bring out the desired result, following in principle, if not also in detail, the popular theology

of the day. So when he wishes to compare Jesus to the Aaronic high priest, he endeavours to support his comparison by a passage from Ps. cx., combined with a passage from Ps. ii., more particularly by the words, "The Lord sware and will not repent, thou art a PRIEST for ever after the order of Melchizedek" (v. 5, 6; vii. 21). These words are understood in accordance, doubtless, with the current interpretation of them (*cf.* Matt. xxii. 41-46; 1 Cor. xv. 25, &c.), to be spoken directly of Jesus Christ; they are understood to constitute the formula of his appointment by God to the office of the priesthood (v. 5, 6; vii. 20, 21); and they are thought of as addressed to Him after He had taken His seat at God's right hand subsequent to the ascension. Both Ps. ii. and Ps. cx. are manifestly spoken of kings, the latter of a king seated at God's right hand, and, if applied to Christ at all, they can only be applied to Him as now exalted and made higher than the heavens. Melchizedek, too, was a king as well as a priest, whence it would seem to follow that a priest after the order of Melchizedek must necessarily be an exalted priest, and one that shall remain exalted for ever. Be that as it may, the session of Christ at God's right hand when He was made priest can refer to nothing else than the session that commenced subsequent to His incarnation and death. The author's oft-repeated reference to the sitting down after the ascension (i. 3; *cf.* vv. 5, 13; viii. 1; xii. 2),—sometimes echoing the very words of Ps. cx. (x. 12, 13),—his assertion that Christ *became* a Melchizedek-priest or high priest only after He was made perfect (v. 9, 10; vi. 20; vii. 22),—that the word of the oath appointed Him a priest after He had been perfected for evermore (vii. 28),—and, above all, the personal characteristics of a Melchizedek-priest as such,—which are identified in part with those of Melchizedek himself, and expressly contrasted with those of the Levitical priests, throughout chap. vii.,—such characteristics as exaltation (vii. 4, *seq.*, 26), deathlessness (vv. 8, 16, *seq.*), eternal unchangeableness (v. 24), absolute sinlessness (v. 26), implying freedom from weakness (v. 28), and from intercourse with sinful men (v. 26), such as Christ had while on earth (v. 2; xii. 3): all these things show plainly that Christ's appointment as a Melchizedek-priest

is thought of as taking place, not either before the incarnation or during His earthly life, but at the time of His sitting down at God's right hand *after* having made purification of sins (i. 3). In the quotation from Ps. ii., "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee" (v. 5), the expression "this day" points to the time, subsequent to His death, when His exaltation commenced, as i. 4, 5 clearly proves. And (to borrow our author's phraseology) what we say is yet more abundantly evident from the circumstance that Christ, as to His human extraction, sprang out of Judah (vii. 14), and that when He "arose" or assumed the priesthood, He superseded both the Levitical priesthood and the law of which that priesthood formed a part (vii. 11-13)—things which He could have done only if His priesthood were of a heavenly and not of an earthly order. In short, the author's own statement, in winding up his chapter on Melchizedek, contains the pith of the whole case: "The law appointeth men high priests having weakness"—by reason of which they die (vii. 8), and are bound to offer for sins, their own as well as the people's (v. 2, 3; vii. 27)—"but the word of the oath which was after the law appointeth a Son perfected for evermore" (vii. 28)—and therefore subject neither to weakness, that is, to sinfulness (v. 3), nor by consequence to death.

But now, if this be so, if the priesthood of Christ, as the psalm testifies, commenced only after He sat down at God's right hand, the author's quotation proves something less, it is true, but also much more than his argument requires or admits of. And hence arises a curious but quite characteristic inconsistency in the mode in which the priesthood of Christ is represented in different parts of the epistle, an inconsistency that has led several writers to suppose that the author attributes a double priesthood to Christ, one after the order of Aaron and another after the order of Melchizedek, though such a solution raises far more serious difficulties than those which it is proposed to remove. The writer's object is to establish the *fact* and the *order* of Christ's high priesthood as a step towards comparing His functions as Mediator of the Gospel with the functions of the Aaronic high priest as mediator of the law; which is done in chaps. viii., ix., and x.,

where it is shown, or attempted to be shown, that the one exercises functions similar to the other, though in a higher, that is, in a heavenly sphere. But the quotation from Ps. cx. proves less than this : it proves merely that Christ was a priest, not that He was a high priest ; unless, indeed, we understand the epithet *high* in a general sense as equivalent to exalted or "great" (x. 21), which the author does not appear to do, since he uses the combination "great high priest" (iv. 14). This however, is of little moment, because, from the typical standpoint, there is no essential difference between priest and high priest ; neither affords an exact representation of Christ, but the functions of both resemble those of Christ so far, and about equally far. There is no spiritual analogue corresponding to the ordinary priests as distinguished from the high priest, for believers are usually spoken of as "the people," rarely as priests (xiii. 10), and if they are to be regarded as priests at all, they must be regarded as priests of the same standing with Christ, the functions or experiences of both being exactly alike. Both alike enter the holy place (x. 19), He as forerunner (vi. 20) and they as after-runners (xii. 1), He as Leader and they as led (ii. 10). Both alike are sons (*id.*). Both are brethren, and brethren "made in all things like" each other (v. 17). So that if He be a high priest when exalted and glorified, they must be high priests also ; if He be merely a priest, they will likewise be priests.

On the other hand, the writer's argument proves something more, or at least something else, than what his argument requires. Instead of furnishing a basis for establishing the existence of similarity between the functions of Christ and the functions of the Aaronic high priest, it rather furnishes a basis for proving that no such similarity does or can possibly exist. It proves not only that Christ is a priest, and one of an exalted, heavenly, unchangeable order, but also that He did not become a priest till He had sat down forever at God's right hand. And as no one can exercise priestly functions till he has become a priest, whatever functions Christ exercises as a Melchizedek-priest must be exercised during His session at God's right hand, subsequent to His ascension and glorification. But when Canaan is assumed to represent heaven, the



functions of Moses in initiating the covenant and leading the people to rest are *all* discharged as soon as the land is entered ; when the holy place is assumed to represent heaven, the functions of Aaron on the day of atonement are *all* discharged as soon as the holy place is entered, and the blood sprinkled on the Mercy-seat, and there is no such thing as a sitting down, much less a priestly work subsequent to sitting down ; and so the curious result is reached, that the work of the Aaronic high priest (including Moses) lies entirely outside the sphere, local and temporal, to which the work of a priest after the order of Melchizedek must be confined ! Not only so, but since the work of Christ as a Melchizedek-priest is performed exclusively in heaven, after He has reached the perfected glorified state, it must from the nature of the case be of a heavenly and glorious nature, and this means that it can have no resemblance whatever to the work of Moses and Aaron, which was of an earthly and inglorious nature. All the same, however, the author, building on another set of Old Testament quotations, combines the character of a Melchizedek-priest with the *rôle* of an Aaronic high priest, representing Christ as at once a priest after the order of Melchizedek, and yet as exercising functions corresponding to those of Aaron—as offering Himself (ix. 25), through suffering (v. 26), or dying (v. 28), and so putting away or making purification of sins—all which He did *before* sitting down at God's right hand (x. 12 ; i. 3), before, therefore, He became a priest, or possessed any of the characteristics of a Melchizedek-priest ! Nor is this inconsistency to be set down as at all isolated or extraordinary. We shall meet very soon with precisely similar inconsistencies in the details of the typology which the author proceeds to work out. Indeed, so far are conflicting representations of this sort from being matter of surprise, that they are just what might have been anticipated in the circumstances. For when we find several different Old Testament quotations wrested from their historical sense and connection, and compelled to support a fancied analogy between law and Gospel, meanings being read into them which they were never intended to convey, it is no wonder if the results and issues are sometimes as odd as they are incompatible. Such incongruities would,

indeed, be very inexplicable, if Christ were a priest in the proper sense of the word, if His functions, as leader of salvation, bore a strict correspondence to the functions either of Aaron or Melchizedek, and if the author's typological system had any solid foundation in fact; but as Christ is a priest only in a figurative sense, as His functions differ not less completely from those of Aaron and Melchizedek—of each separately, or of both combined, in any way they can be combined—than the Mosaic tabernacle or the land of Canaan differs from the heavenly state, such variations in the symbolic picture cause little or no trouble. They are interesting chiefly as specimens of apostolic exegesis, and because of the clear warrant which they supply for distinguishing between the fundamental ideas of the New Testament writers, which are of permanent value and authority, and the ephemeral oratorical garb in which they are clothed for the purpose of rendering them acceptable to readers prejudiced against them, and in favour of different ideas. But we are anticipating.

We have said that the functions of Christ differ from those of Melchizedek, as well as from those of Aaron. This way of speaking, though it is almost unavoidable, is, perhaps, fitted to convey a false impression. For the functions of Christ are not directly brought into comparison with those of Melchizedek. The order or standing, including the sphere, of Christ's priesthood is not only compared, but identified with that of Melchizedek, in accordance with the statement of Ps. cx., "Thou art a Priest for ever *after the order of Melchizedek.*" But order or standing depends not on functions, but on personal nature, character, and dignity. And an extremely violent interpretation is put upon the narrative in Genesis, relating to Melchizedek (xiv. 18-20), before a parallel can be made out between him and Jesus in these respects.

As usual, in such cases, the writer's own independent ideas touching the personal characteristics of Jesus determine the meaning which he reads into the Old Testament passage, and the personal characteristics which he attributes to the man Melchizedek. According to the manifest historical sense of the narrative in Genesis, Melchizedek is an ordinary mortal man of flesh and blood, king of a place called Salem, and

priest of God Most High. Nothing is said, it is true, of his extraction, of his previous and subsequent history, or of his ultimate destiny ; but this proves merely that they were in nowise remarkable, in nowise different from those of ordinary men. Our author's view of Melchizedek, on the contrary, is conveyed in the following terms :—" For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of God Most High, who met Abraham, returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him, to whom, also, Abraham divided a tenth part of all (being first, by interpretation, king of righteousness, and then, also, king of Salem, which is king of peace ; without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like unto the Son of God), abideth a priest continually " (vii. 1-3). According to this statement, viewed in the light of what follows, Melchizedek is an immortal being, in contrast to " mortal men," \* belonging to a spiritual (opp. to *σάρκινος*, v. 16), " better " (v. 7, *cf.* v. 19), that is, heavenly, order of existence. Salem is not the name of a place, but the combination king-of-Salem is a free developed translation of the name Melchizedek ; the two names, or, rather, the one name, with its accompanying explicative rendering, is meant to indicate the character of Melchizedek as an exalted, righteous, and (of consequence) peaceful being (v. 2). † And not only is this priestly king of righteousness (involving peace) immortal in the sense that he can never die, but he is eternal in the sense that he was never born ; so that his nature, on which the order of his priesthood is founded, is identical with that of the eternal Son of God (v. 3) ; who is

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\* Ἀποθνήσκοντες ἄνθρωποι (v. 8) : which words do not mean, as our English translators, old and new, would have us believe, " men that die," in contrast to " this man " that " liveth " (v. 8), but " dying men," in contrast to " this being " (οὗτος, v. 4) that " liveth " (v. 8), and " abideth for ever " (v. 24), " abideth a priest continually " (v. 3)—implying that the *being* in question is not human, at least not *merely* human, but divine.

† If any one thinks it improbable, impossible, or incredible that the author of Hebrews should deal with a Scripture proper name after the manner here set forth, let him take the trouble to look into almost any part of the writings of Philo Judæus, where he will meet with examples of the same thing *usque ad nauseam*, and then, I will guarantee, he will find it easy enough to accept as the veritable teaching of the writer everything that the passage before us contains.

“holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens,” in one word, “perfected for evermore,” and so seated eternally at God’s right hand (vv. 26-28 ; viii. 1 ; x. 12).

Of course, such an interpretation of the Old Testament passage appears to us utterly extravagant, more extravagant, perhaps, than any other that will be found in the whole compass of the New Testament—which is saying very much ; but no other meaning can be extracted from the words used by the author of Hebrews, without applying to them a method of exegesis as thoroughly arbitrary as that which he applies to the words of the author of Genesis. And it is easy to see, not merely that the above interpretation of the passage in Genesis is plainly implied in the author’s words, but that such an interpretation is led up to, and even necessitated, by the view which he takes of Ps. cx. For in that psalm Christ, while seated at God’s right hand, is addressed as “a Priest for ever *after the order of Melchizedek*.” Now a priest after the order of Aaron is a priest descended from Levi (vii. 5), and, therefore, possessing a nature identical with that of Aaron, fleshly (v. 16) weak (v. 2), sinful (v. 3), and, therefore, mortal (vii. 8). In like manner, a priest after the order of Melchizedek must be a priest possessing a nature identical with that of Melchizedek. And since Christ is declared to be a priest “for ever,” and His nature, as now exalted at God’s right hand, to be spiritual (v. 16), holy (v. 26), immortal (v. 24), as well as eternal (i. 2 ; ix. 14), the nature of Melchizedek must likewise have been spiritual, righteous (*cf.* king of righteousness), immortal, eternal. Our author knows of but one order of priests of God Most High upon earth, that which rests in the tribe of Levi (vii. 5) ; and as Melchizedek was not descended from Levi, he could not be a priest in virtue of his descent from “mortal men” at all, that is, his priesthood must have been founded on the possession of an eternal, underived, imperishable spiritual nature identical with that of the Son of God. The mere fact that he is called a priest in Genesis, while no mention is made of a priestly stock from which he could have sprung, is a sufficient proof to our author’s mind, that, so far as his priesthood



was concerned, he must have been “undescended” (*ἀγενεαλόγητος*). In a case like that of Melchizedek, original descent from man and priesthood are incompatible. If Melchizedek were to be a priest, he *must* have been “without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life, but made like unto the [eternal] Son of God” (v. 3). A priest after the “likeness” (*cf.* *ὁμοιότητα*, iv. 15 and *ὁμοιωθῆναι*, ii. 17, with *ἀφομοιωμένος*, vii. 3) of the Son of God is a priest constituted such “not according to the law of a carnal commandment”—that is, by natural physical descent from Levi, such as the law demanded—“but according to the power of an indissoluble life”—that is, in virtue of having a nature identical with that of the only begotten of the Father (vii. 16). It is, therefore, as certain as any exegetical fact can be that Melchizedek is thought of as being a priest in virtue of possessing an eternal, underived, imperishable principle of life identical with that possessed by the eternal Son of God; the possession of such a life-principle is the very foundation of his priestly character; to deny that he possesses it is equivalent to denying that he is a priest, which the Old Testament narrative explicitly asserts that he is.

It would, of course, be quite useless to inquire who this extraordinary character called Melchizedek is conceived to be, whether he is regarded as identical with the “Angel of Jehovah,” or whether the writer thinks of him as an entirely independent celestial being. The point is no doubt one of those which it is “hard to explain” (*δυσερμήνευτος*, v. 11)—an expression, by the way, which can only be understood if taken as an avowal on the part of the author that the passage in Genesis on his view of it involves extreme difficulty, and that he is himself in doubt what to make of the extraordinary being whom his exegesis has conjured into existence.\* Still, though

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\* If our most recent exegetes had their way, there would really be nothing *δυσερμήνευτος* about the “oracles of God” relating to Melchizedek at all! This is a clear proof, among many others, of the utter untrustworthiness of the attempts that are constantly made to soften down or explain away the plain meaning of the writer. The author himself feels the difficulty involved in his exegesis, and frankly admits its existence.

Perhaps it may be desirable to add that the reader who wishes to see the ingenious sophistries that have been fabricated by interpreters of this passage torn

the difficulty raised by interpreting Ps. cx. as a direct prophecy of Christ, and then combining it rigidly with the narrative in Genesis, is distinctly recognised, there is no attempt at solving it. The truth is that the author has no particular concern with questions of that kind. It is enough for him to have established the reality and the nature of Christ's priesthood upon principles that will be accepted by his readers. He is no more bound to solve the problem as to who Melchizedek is for his readers than they are bound to solve it for him. Writer and readers alike take their stand on the popular authorised interpretation of Ps. cx., so far at least as the application of the psalm to Christ is concerned. Neither is bound to guarantee to the other the accuracy of that interpretation. Nor can either be held responsible for all or any of the consequences that are involved in it, or may be deduced from it. Both can afford to leave such points to look after themselves.

The nature of Christ, then, and the nature attributed to Melchizedek, are as closely identified as if the one had been descended from the other. But what of the functions belonging to Melchizedek? This was the point which we wished to settle.

According to the Genesis narrative, two functions, or more correctly two acts, were performed by Melchizedek, the bringing forth of bread and wine, and the blessing of Abraham; to which might perhaps be added the reception of tithes from Abraham. The first of these is not alluded to at all by the author of Hebrews, doubtless because it had no manner of connection with the functions of a priest ordinarily so-called. The second is indeed referred to as being in some sort a priestly function (Num. vi. 22, *seq.*), but only to prove the superior dignity of Melchizedek above Abraham, and especially above his Levitical descendants. The last was also a priestly prerogative, and is mentioned and made use of to establish the pre-eminent dignity of Melchizedek: that being done, it

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to shreds, will find it done admirably by the masterly hand of Bleek in his *Der Brief an die Hebräer*, a work which, though it has now been before the public for about half-a-century, is in many respects far superior to anything that has been written on the epistle since it was published.

falls like the others completely into the background. None of the acts performed by Melchizedek are ever brought into comparison with similar acts on the part of Jesus. The reason of this is not difficult to perceive. Melchizedek is not a type of Jesus in the sense that Aaron is a type of Jesus—though that is often supposed and stated—particularly when a double priesthood is attributed to Jesus. Melchizedek is related to Jesus, not as Aaron is related to Jesus, but as Aaron is related to each of his descendants and successors in the high priesthood. Melchizedek is not a figurative representation of Jesus, belonging to the present earthly world, but, as it were, a real representation, belonging to the better heavenly world, another Jesus, glorious and exalted, in substance as well as in form. Moreover, the character attributed to Melchizedek by the present writer is not in the main the character sketched in the Genesis narrative, but just the character of Jesus, originating in the writer's own mind, and projected back first into Ps. cx., and then through Ps. cx. into the Genesis narrative. And the whole discussion relating to Melchizedek, in so far as it is directed to establishing the personal character (= the order) of Jesus as a priest, consists simply in eliciting from the Genesis narrative, combined with Ps. cx., the personal character which the writer already knows Jesus to possess. Nothing is really added to the writer's original ideas about Jesus; he merely reads them into the two Old Testament passages, and then reads them out again: nevertheless, relatively to his readers, several advantages are gained. A warrant is obtained for applying the word *priest* to Jesus. The superiority of Jesus, in character and dignity to the Levitical priests, is demonstrated. A foundation is thus laid for instituting a sustained comparison between the functions of Jesus and those of the Aaronic high priest, so as to evince the superiority of the former. And the effect of the whole is to commend the person and work of Jesus to the continued confidence and trust of the Hebrews.

But it is evident that, though the designation *priest* is transferred from Melchizedek to Jesus, on the warrant of Psalm cx., nothing else is transferred; the character of Jesus remains precisely what it was before. For instead of the char-

acter of Melchizedek moulding the apostle's representation of the character of Jesus, the very reverse is the case—the character of Jesus moulds and determines the character attributed to Melchizedek. And as for the functions of Melchizedek, neither are these attributed to Jesus, but rather, as they do not consort particularly well with the new character which Melchizedek has received from Jesus, they are scarcely attributed as priestly functions to Melchizedek himself. That which relates to the bread and wine is, significantly enough, not even mentioned at all; and the others are brought in rather as individual acts proving his dignity than as functions which he habitually discharges. So that the designation “priest after the order of Melchizedek,” when applied to Jesus, really tells us nothing either as to His character or as to His functions. If His character and functions were priestly in the proper sense before that designation was applied, they will be priestly still; if they were unpriestly in the proper sense before that designation was applied, they will be unpriestly still. In fact, the word *priest* in the above expression has scarcely any distinctive meaning of its own, for it neither connotes the historical characteristics belonging to Melchizedek in the Genesis narrative, nor yet the historical characteristics belonging to the Jewish king addressed in Ps. cx. The latter is evidently thought of by the writer of the psalm as merely uniting in his own person the office of king to that of priest, as the man Melchizedek is likewise conceived to have done. And it is this union of the two offices of king and priest that constitutes him a priest “after the order of Melchizedek,” not the fact that he is a priest “for ever.” In this, therefore, and not in the metaphysical attribute of eternity, lies the ground of the psalmist's statement. And if the king-priest is spoken of as destined to be a priest “for ever,” this by no means implies, as every Old Testament student is aware, the possession on his part of an imperishable principle of life, but only that the priesthood as well as the kingship should continue unbroken in his line. If we say that the word *priest* in the expression so often quoted from the psalm means “an eternal, self-existent, spiritual, glorified being,” we merely follow our author in reading into it the character of Jesus as we ourselves know it



from independent sources; and if we are asked what functions belong to a being of that description as such, we must either say nothing, or state what functions we know Jesus discharges in the saving of the world. The word priest, though it would tell us a great deal about the functions of an ordinary human being of flesh and blood, can from the nature of the case tell us almost nothing about the functions of an eternal, spiritual, glorified being. We know only that the functions of such a being must be proper to His nature, that is, they must be moral or spiritual functions, and this implies that they must be entirely different from the functions of a priest in the only sense of that word which for us has any meaning.

Christ as a Melchizedek-priest, therefore, is just Christ in His exalted, glorified state, nothing more and nothing less. And this leads us to expect that when Christ is spoken of merely as a Priest after the order of Melchizedek, the functions attributed to Him as such will be just the literal functions which He discharges as Saviour of the world in His exalted state; whereas, when His functions are brought into comparison with those of the Aaronic high priest, they will be clothed in physical, that is, in purely figurative forms, and instead of being confined to His exalted state, where nothing in the least resembling the functions of Aaron could possibly be attributed to Him, they will be removed to His state of humiliation, where He appears in flesh and blood like Aaron, and where spiritual processes taking place in His own person are closely associated with analogous physical acts and processes. Now, as a matter of fact, we find that this is just the case. At the close of the section devoted to Melchizedek (vii. 1-25), in which Jesus is spoken of simply as a Priest, and where He is contrasted as to His nature and mode of appointment with the Levitical priests, the sole function ascribed to Him is that of "saving to the uttermost them that draw nigh to God through Him by making intercession for them" (v. 25). With this may be compared the statement of v. 9, 10, that when "made perfect He became to all them that obey Him the Author of eternal salvation,"—where the writer adds (slightly inaccurately) that He was "addressed by God, an High (?) Priest after the order of Melchizedek." That the expressions

“them that draw nigh to God through Him,” and “them that obey Him,” are equivalent, is self-evident; as also that each is just a name for believers. To “draw nigh” to God is simply to enter into fellowship with God by faith (xi. 6)—in figurative language, to enter into the holy place within the veil, whither as a forerunner Jesus entered on our behalf (vi. 20). Further, it is manifest that to “save unto the uttermost,” and to be “the Author of eternal salvation,” describe exactly the same function—“unto the uttermost” answering to “eternal,” as the following “ever liveth” shows—and that this function is the sole and entire function of the Leader of salvation in leading many sons unto glory (ii. 10). Not that this is all or indeed any part of what is usually comprehended by theologians under “the work of Christ;” for, according to them, the work of Christ was finished at the moment of His own death, so that what follows is not strictly the work of Christ but “the work of the Spirit;” whereas, according to the present writer, the work of Christ as a Saviour commenced only after He had been made perfect (v. 9), after He had passed through the heavens (iv. 16), had entered within the veil as a Forerunner on our behalf (vi. 20), had been separated from sinners and made higher than the heavens (vii. 26), had sat down at God’s right hand (viii. 1). The function of Christ as a Melchizedek-priest does not comprehend anything done by Him during His earthly life, nor even at the moment of entering heaven. His earthly experiences of suffering and death had merely the effect of making Him perfect (ii. 10; v. 9), so that He could enter within the veil and *become* (on sitting down) a Melchizedek-Priest (vi. 20), become the Author of eternal salvation to all them that obey Him (v. 10), the Leader of the salvation of many glorified sons (ii. 10). As it became God to perfect Him through sufferings, so a High Priest already perfected for evermore, holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners and made higher than the heavens—such an High Priest became us (vii. 26, 28). And the work of such a High Priest has nothing whatever to do with offering, but consists, as we have seen, in intercession on our behalf (v. 25), a work that appears to go on throughout eternity, or at least until the whole body of the elect have been completely saved. Jesus

entered within the veil as a Forerunner, and became a High Priest for ever "on our behalf" (vi. 20), that is, in order to benefit us by making eternal intercession.

How this intercessory function operates on believers, and how Jesus is fitted to discharge it, has been already, in part, explained, and appears plainly from statements like those which follow. "Having, therefore, a great High Priest that hath passed through the heavens [= is seated at God's right hand (viii. 1)], Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession [= "hold fast our boldness and the glorying of our hope firm unto the end" (iii. 6, 14); "show the same diligence unto the fulness of the hope unto the end," being "imitators of them who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises" — "things which accompany salvation" (vi. 9, 11, 12); "hold the hope set before us, which we have as an anchor of soul, a hope sure and steadfast, and entering into that which is within the veil"—where is "the end" (vv. 11, 18, 19); "hold fast the confession of our hope that it waver not" (x. 22, 23); "have faith unto the saving of the soul" (v. 39); "run with patience the race set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Leader and Perfecter of faith" (xii. 1, 2)]; for we have not an High Priest that cannot sympathise with our weaknesses, but one that hath been tried in all respects like as we are, without sinning [= we have an High Priest that is "become merciful (or sympathetic) and faithful," by having been "made in all things like unto His brethren" (ii. 17), that hath been "compassed with weakness," and so is "able to bear gently with the ignorant and erring" (v. 2), that hath "suffered under trial," and so is "able to help them that are suffering under trial" (ii. 18), that hath "learned obedience from the things which He suffered, and, having been made perfect," is "become the Author of eternal salvation to all them that obey Him" (v. 7-10), or, as it is otherwise expressed, is "able to save unto the uttermost them that draw nigh to God through Him" (vii. 25)]. Let us, therefore, draw near with boldness to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy (or sympathy), and [so] find grace for needed help" [= grace to help us to "suffer under trial" (ii. 18), to "run with patience the race set before us" (xii. 1, 2), to "show diligence unto the fulness of the

hope unto the end" (vi. 11), to "go without the camp to Him bearing His reproach" (xiii. 13), &c.] (iv. 14-16). From these statements and references it appears certain (1.) that the experiences of Christ in the flesh up to the point of His sitting down at God's right hand had the direct effect of sanctifying, perfecting, and glorifying His own person, so that He became in His sanctified, perfected, and glorified state a Melchizedek-priest, and that they had no other direct effect; (2.) that the sole function of Christ as a Melchizedek-priest is to intercede with God on behalf of believers that they may obtain suitable supplies of grace to meet the needs of their life in the flesh; (3.) that the effect of grace (*i.e.*, of the Spirit of grace) on the persons of believers is to enable them to pass through experiences identical with those of Christ, so that they, like Him, are sanctified, perfected, and glorified, and become in their sanctified, perfected, and glorified state heirs with Him of eternal salvation.

Now, nothing can be more certain than that the work of Christ is here described in terms approaching very near to literality. The expression "sat down at God's right hand" is, no doubt, figurative, being borrowed from the psalm—though, indeed, the same expression is of frequent occurrence in the other apostolic writings. Probably, too, there is figure underlying the way in which Christ is spoken of as acquiring sympathy through His sufferings, at all events, in so far as the possession of such experimentally acquired sympathy is regarded as essential to His becoming the Author of eternal salvation to all them that obey Him. It may, at least, be presumed that Christ had begun the work of intercession from the very foundation of the world (xi. 4), which would seem to imply that He already possessed the qualities necessary to that work, and consequently that the Godhead had sufficient original sympathy to bestow grace on needy and repentant sinners. It is certain, also, that Christ had to endure suffering because it became God to inflict it (ii. 10), that He had to pass through death because, having assumed flesh and blood, He must needs "bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil," which could only be done "through death" (v. 14), and that these, at any rate, were literal



objects or purposes of Christ's sufferings. It is probable, therefore, that the epithets "merciful and faithful" (the last word is borrowed from Num. xii. 7, as its recurrence at iii. 2 proves) are to be understood in a more or less figurative sense, being used as correlatives to "high priest in things pertaining to God" (v. 17), and that the literal representation of the matter is to be sought in the verses above (9-15).

On the other hand, the communication of grace or the Holy Spirit to believers through faith is unquestionably a literal fact of experience. No less unquestionable is it that the entire change wrought upon the person of each believer, from the moment he first believes to the moment he is perfectly sanctified and glorified, is literally accomplished through the indwelling power of the Holy Ghost. And that the fact of Christ's intercession is a literal fact is shown, not only by the examples we have of it during His earthly life (*e.g.*, John xvii.), but also by Paul's speaking in precisely the same terms regarding it out of all connection with priesthood. Says he: "It is Christ Jesus that hath died, yea, rather, that hath been raised from the dead, who is on the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" (Rom. viii. 34). These words, when viewed in the connection in which they occur, prove that the intercessory work of Christ is regarded by Paul, equally with the author of Hebrews, as the cause and the guarantee of the eternal salvation of all believers.

But further, the association of literal language in describing the work of salvation with the Melchizedek (as distinguished from the typico-Aaronic) view of the priesthood of Christ comes still more strikingly out in a remarkable passage at the opening of chap. vi., which has not yet received so much attention as it deserves. The passage is in the following terms:—"Wherefore, leaving the word of the beginning [= the pre-Melchizedek state] of Christ, let us pass on to His perfection [= His Melchizedek state]; not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the teaching of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment [—all which things belong to the pre-Melchizedek,—*i.e.*, the imperfect—state of Christ and of Christians]; and this will we do, if God

permit. For as touching those who were once enlightened (x. 32), and tasted of the heavenly gift [= 'righteousness' (v. 13; cf. Rom. v. 17)], and became partakers of the Holy Ghost, and tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, and then fell away [= 'apostatized from the living God' (iii. 12)] it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame [= 'tread under foot the Son of God, and count the blood of the covenant, wherewith they were sanctified, an unholy thing, and do despite unto the Spirit of grace' (x. 29)]."

I need not argue in favour of the rendering "*His* perfection" (τὴν τελειότητα), as against the erroneous and misleading rendering of the Revisers, "perfection" or "full growth." That it is "*the* perfection [of Christ]" of which the apostle proposes to speak in the sequel is quite manifest, not only from the drift of the statement, and even from its express terms, but from the discussion itself, which is contained in chap vii., where not a word is said about "perfection" as a thing in general, but only about "*the* perfection" of Christ as opposed to the imperfection of the Levitical priests. The word corresponds and points back to "perfect" (τελείων) in the preceding verse, where the rendering of the Revisers is again somewhat misleading. A "perfect" man is one who has reached the heavenly glorified state,—who has experienced repentance from dead works and faith towards God, baptism and the laying on of hands, resurrection from the dead and eternal judgment,—who has tasted the heavenly gift, has become a sharer of the Holy Ghost, has tasted the good word of God and the powers of the world to come,—one, in short, who knows by habit (v. 14) and experience (v. 13) what it is to be righteous. Such a man does not require to be lectured about the present earthly state of Christ and of Christians; he is prepared to receive instruction about the future heavenly state of Christ and of Christians. The former is but milk for babes. The latter is solid food for full-grown men.

There is a certain rhetorical iteration or amplification of the same idea in vv. 2, 4, 5, of the above quotation that is

apt to create a false impression. The one essential process in these verses is that which appears again in v. 6,—viz., repentance or renewal—the putting off of the old man and the putting on of the new—through the power of the Holy Ghost received by faith. Baptism and the laying on of hands are symbolical acts representing this two-fold process, baptism representing the putting off of the old man, and the laying on of hands the communication of the Holy Ghost, or the putting on of the new. Resurrection from the *dead* is merely the finishing touch of repentance from *dead* works, as the recurrence of the word “dead” clearly indicates; in fact, the whole process as it affects both soul and body is quite frequently spoken of simply as resurrection (Col. iii. 1, &c.). And eternal judgment (*cf.* “eternal salvation,” v. 9) is synonymous with justification, being the formal recognition, on the part of God, that the man who has undergone repentance, or renewal, or resurrection through faith, possesses “righteousness” (v. 13), the passport to life eternal. With respect to the processes mentioned in vv. 4, 5, it is enough to say that they are all manifestly covered, and as it were repeated, by the word repentance in v. 6. There is, in fact, just one and only one great soteriological process, by which men are translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God’s dear Son, a process which has its “beginning” when a man first believes, which has its “perfection” or “end” when a man is justified and glorified, and which is accomplished throughout, as is here expressly implied, by the ineffable working of the Holy Ghost. And this process is exactly the same for Christ and for each believer. It is distinctively named “the beginning” (τῆς ἀρχῆς, vi. 1) of Christ, who is the Leader or “Beginner” (ἀρχηγός) of salvation by faith (ii. 10; xii. 2), and embraces His whole earthly experience of suffering and death up to the point when He sat down on God’s right hand (v. 7, 8; xii. 2). It is contrasted with the perfection or “ending” (τὴν τελειότητα) of Christ,—who is likewise the Perfecter or “Ender” (τελειωτής) of salvation by faith (ii. 10; v. 7; xii. 2),—which embraces His whole heavenly experience of glory and honour, from the point when He sat down on God’s right hand onward to all eternity (v. 10; vii. 26-28). And

this heavenly, perfected, glorified state of Christ is identical with His Melchizedek priesthood.

Now, it is needless to say that here, at any rate, the work of salvation is described in literal terms. Such words as repentance, renewal, resurrection, justification, illumination, regeneration by water and by the Spirit, are common to all the New Testament writings. The means employed in effecting the process of salvation are also the same as are met with elsewhere, whether spiritual and therefore real (the Word, the Spirit, faith), or physical and therefore symbolical (baptism and the laying on of hands). And the use of such language to set forth the process of putting away sin on the one hand, and communicating righteousness on the other, is associated in the most intimate manner with Christ in the exercise of His function as a priest after the order of Melchizedek (v. 9, 10, *seq.*).

If, now, we turn to the typico-Aaronic view of the priesthood of Christ, we shall find an entirely different set of functions ascribed to Him, while the work of salvation is presented under quite another aspect. This view insinuates itself more or less distinctly at several points in the epistle before it comes to be formally propounded and discussed in chaps. viii., ix., and x. It appears, for example, in the use of the word High Priest, instead of priest (the proper designation of Melchizedek), everywhere except in the section vii. 1-25 expressly and exclusively devoted to Melchizedek. It appears clearly in the mention of "expiating the sins of the people" (ii. 17), a function proper to a high priest like Aaron, but not to a glorified king-priest like Melchizedek; and, still more clearly, in the statement that "every high priest, being taken from among men, is appointed for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins; who can bear gently with the ignorant and erring, for that he himself also is compassed with weakness; and by reason thereof is bound, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins" (v. 1-3)—a statement that is again taken up in chap. viii. 3, where it constitutes one of the props on which the typico-Aaronic view of the priesthood of Christ is based. And it appears, finally, as soon as the discussion regarding



Melchizedek has been concluded, in the words "who needeth not daily like the [Aaronic] high priests to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins and then for the people's, for this [offering up sacrifices first for his own sins and then for the people's] He did once for all, when He offered up Himself" (vii. 27).

But, as just said, it is only when we come to chap. viii. that any sustained comparison is instituted between the functions of Jesus, on the one hand, and those of the Aaronic high priest, on the other. Nor is it easy to see how the writer can bring himself to institute such a comparison at all, or to say what he does say regarding the work of Christ as a Priest. For on the author's own showing, there is no express warrant in the Old Testament for speaking of Jesus while on earth as a Priest, or for regarding all or any of His earthly experiences (*e.g.*, His crucifixion) as priestly acts. On the contrary, the very essence of the priesthood attributed to Jesus on the warrant of Ps. cx. is that it belongs to the heavenly, not to the earthly sphere, having become His only after He had "sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens" (viii. 1). So much is asserted in the opening of this very chapter, where we read, "Now, if He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all [much less a 'true' or 'perfect' priest], seeing there are those that offer the gifts according to the law" (v. 4). As the case stands, He is in heaven, seated at God's right hand, "a Minister of the [heavenly] holy place, and of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, not man" (vv. 1, 2). Such statements would seem to shut out entirely the idea of an earthly priesthood on the part of Christ, whose leading function should be not to make intercession, but to offer Himself as a sacrifice for sins. Yet they put in our hands a key which, if it cannot help us to reconcile the writer's diverse views of the priestly functions of Christ, will at least enable us to explain how the discrepancy arose.

As in other similar cases, the diversity in the author's mode of representation is to be traced, in part at least, to the use made of Old Testament quotations, which yield, when applied, conflicting results. The quotations referring to Melchizedek, and the view of Christ's priesthood, which our author bases upon them, have been already discussed. In

this and the following chapters we meet with a different set of quotations, giving rise to a different view of the priesthood of Christ. In v. 5, for example, we read that the Aaronic priests "serve that which is a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, even as Moses is warned of God when about to make the tabernacle, 'For see,' saith he, 'that thou make all things according to the *type* (τύπος) that was showed thee in the mount.'"

Whatever may be thought as to the historical meaning of this passage in the Mosaic narrative, there can be no doubt as to the meaning that is here put upon it. The earthly tabernacle fashioned by Moses, and everything connected with it, is regarded as having been copied from a heavenly original, the same in form, but of a higher order or nature. The earthly tabernacle with its ministry and its offerings is a shadowy representation of which the corresponding reality is in heaven. This implies that there must exist "a [heavenly] holy place, and a true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man" (v. 2). But a tabernacle like the Mosaic would have no meaning, would serve no end, unless there were connected with it a "ministry" (λειτουργία, v. 6). And a ministry implies a minister (λειτουργός, v. 2) or ministers, that is, a priest or priests. And a priest implies an offering or offerings, "for every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices, whence it follows of necessity that this high priest also have somewhat to offer" (v. 3). Thus, in the region of spiritual heavenly things, there must be a sanctuary or holy place, and a ministry connected with that sanctuary, including a priest or priests, and an offering or offerings; that is to say, something must be sought of a spiritual kind corresponding to all these things. Further, as the Mosaic tabernacle, with its ministry, formed a part of the covenant made at Sinai (ix. 1, *seq.*), so the Scripture speaks of a Second or New Covenant, of which the heavenly tabernacle with its ministry must be supposed to form a part. "For, finding fault with them, He saith, Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them forth

out of the land of Egypt ; for they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord ; I will put my laws into their mind, and in their heart also will I write them, and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people ; and they shall not teach every man his fellow-citizen and every man his brother saying, know the Lord ; for all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest of them ; for I will be merciful to their iniquities, and their sins will I remember no more " (vv. 8-12). From these words of the Old Testament prophet, our author infers that God's intention was to inaugurate at some future time a new dispensation co-ordinate in importance, and the same in form, with that which was inaugurated at Sinai, the new dispensation, like the old, taking the form of a covenant between God and the people of Israel, and this new covenant, which prophecy declares shall be brought in, he identifies with the Gospel or Christian dispensation. And since a covenant like the Sinaitic implies a mediator like Moses, as well as a ceremony such as took place when the Sinaitic covenant was inaugurated, there must exist in the region of spiritual things a person with functions corresponding to those of Moses, and a ceremony answering to the inaugural ceremony ; that is to say, something must be sought in the spiritual world answering to the work of Moses in mediating the covenant, and this something must be attributed to a spiritual person.

Let it be observed how much is involved in the interpretation put upon the two Old Testament passages which are here quoted and applied. Moses was instructed to make *all things* according to the pattern shown him in the Mount ; in other words, the tabernacle, and *all things* connected with it — its vessels, its sacrifices, its ministers—shadowed forth spiritual heavenly things. Indeed, it is quite out of the question to suppose that while the tabernacle, with some parts of the ritual which it was formed to embody, was copied from things in the heavens, other parts of the ritual bore no resemblance to heavenly things at all. The writer himself expressly says that "the law," that is, the whole Mosaic system, everything

that Moses instituted, had "a shadow of the good things to come" (x. 1)—shadow being equivalent to pattern or copy (viii. 5). His view, therefore, distinctly is that everything in the earthly system must have a corresponding something in the heavenly system, otherwise it would have no *raison d'être*.

Now, it may be said at once, and without the least exaggeration, that such a view, on the very face of it, is extravagant even to absurdity. And it is easy to see that its extravagance is the legitimate and necessary outcome of the extravagant interpretation put upon the two Old Testament passages on which it is based, especially of the very curious interpretation put upon the former. The statement of the author of Exodus is, "And see that thou make them after their pattern, which hath been showed thee in the Mount" (xxv. 40)—where the pronoun "them" refers to the parts of the golden candlestick, which the writer has just been describing (vv. 31-39). The utmost that this statement can be held to imply is that Moses was somehow made to see a model or concrete representation of the candlestick, of which a minute verbal description is given in the preceding context. It is not said in the passage quoted that a model of the whole tabernacle was shown to Moses,—though that is, no doubt, implied in other parallel passages (xxvi. 30; xxvii. 8; Num. viii. 4)—for it is our author himself that supplies "all things" instead of "them," which is found both in the Hebrew text and in the LXX. This, however, is of small moment. The important point is as to the subjectivity or objectivity of the model which Moses is asserted and imagined to have seen. What the nature of Moses' vision was it were bootless to inquire, since he has not thought fit to favour us with any information concerning "the stuff of which his dreams were made;" nor do we know definitely of what precise nature the author of Exodus, supposing him to be different from Moses, conceived it to have been. If we assume that the statement in Exodus contains the account of a real fact, and is not due to the inventive faculty of the author of the "Priestly Code," we may regard the vision of Moses as partaking much of the same character as that vouchsafed, at later period, to the prophet Isaiah (chap.



vi.), where, however, the materials that go to make up the vision are all drawn from the things which the prophet had actually seen in his every-day experience. Neither in the case of Moses, nor in that of Isaiah, is there the smallest pretence for thinking that the objects of the vision had anything more than a purely *subjective* existence. Even if we were to suppose that God went so far as to create an objective model of the tabernacle in order that Moses might see it, it would be downright insanity to identify this model with "heaven itself." A candlestick with its branches and cups and knops and flowers in heaven! Why, does not the author of Revelation tell us that in heaven "*they need no candle*, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign for ever and ever" (xxii. 5)? Yet the writer to the Hebrews clearly holds that what Moses saw was the "holy place and the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, not man" (viii. 2), in other words, that the contents of his vision had a real objective existence, being nothing else than "the heavenly things" (v. 5) that constitute the immediate environment of the Almighty. He assumes that the words which he quotes were spoken, not with reference to the candlestick merely, but with reference to the whole tabernacle; that instead of "them," which refers to the several parts of the candlestick, we must read "all things," and refer the expression to all the parts and appendages of the tabernacle framed by Moses; and that the meaning of the whole statement is that Moses was shown an objective model of everything connected with the tabernacle about to be framed, *and that this model was absolutely identical with "heaven itself"* (ix. 24)—"*the heavenly things themselves*" (v. 23)! A more extravagant piece of exegesis than this will hardly be found in the whole compass of Rabbinical literature. And yet it is from this piece of exegesis that the author's whole typological system has manifestly been deduced! We may, therefore, expect to find that the details of the writer's typology, when we come to examine them, will partake of the same fanciful character with the exegesis on which they rest; nor should it in the least surprise us if we meet at every step with difficulties and incongruities, ranging from the baldest contradictions to the grossest absurdities. And not only should

we be able to convince ourselves that the typology of the present writer has no foundation save an imaginative one, but that the same is true of all typological interpretation whatever, as applied to the Old Testament writings. For if the typology of the author of Hebrews, *in its whole extent*, must be rejected along with his exegesis as destitute of the smallest historical validity, no one surely will pretend that the fragments of typological and allegorical interpretation scattered through the writings of Paul are to be accepted as historically valid. On the contrary, it will clearly appear that the typico-allegorical method of interpretation was simply a popularly-accepted but historically-worthless method, of which the apostles availed themselves for purposes of popular persuasion, but which for us has no value or authority whatever.

With respect to the second of the two passages quoted, the case is somewhat different, though scarcely more favourable to the application made, and the inferences founded upon it. It is a fact, well-known to students of the Old Testament, that when the prophets attempt to delineate Messianic or Gospel times (*i.e.*, the ideal state of God's kingdom), they invariably do so in forms drawn either from their own or from past times, never in the exact form of future times. The prophets had just as little idea of the exact form that the kingdom of God would take after the first coming of Christ as we ourselves have of the exact form that it will take after His second coming. When a prophet like Jeremiah thought of a new era co-ordinate in importance with the exodus from Egypt, and of a second grand attempt on the part of God to sanctify a people to Himself, he could not but think and speak of what he anticipated in the future under the form and in the terms of what had been experienced in the past. He had, in truth, no idea of any other form, or any other terms, in which to express it. In point of fact, however, the reality is altogether different *as to its outward form* from what the prophets did or could foresee. The people of God, under the Gospel, are not "the house of Israel and the house of Judah," as Jeremiah imagined they would be, nor has the substance of the promise any connection with the land of Canaan. There is no such thing as a new *covenant*, instituted through a mediator, and ratified by

the slaying of a sacrificial victim ; but because the relation constituted between God and the people of Israel at Sinai took the form of a covenant, the prophet expected that the new relation to be constituted between God and His people in the Messianic age would take substantially the same form. It is by no means clear, however, that Jeremiah anticipated that there would be a *ritual system* connected with the new covenant similar to that which is supposed to have accompanied the old ; rather, the opposite is tolerably clear. Some, indeed, go so far as to deny that the prophet Jeremiah held that there were any ritual ordinances connected with the *old* covenant. Whether the passage chiefly relied on in proof of this view (vii. 21-23) will bear the full weight of the inference founded upon it, or whether it be not susceptible of a different interpretation, may be open to doubt ; but at any rate the prophet, though he certainly speaks of the new dispensation as a covenant made between God and the houses of Israel and Judah, knows perfectly well that it will differ materially from the old dispensation ; for he adds, "Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers," &c. . . . "but . . . I will put my laws into their mind, and in their heart also will I write them," &c. These words must be held to indicate what, in the prophet's view, will be the essential feature of the new dispensation, and to imply that, if there are any ritual ceremonies associated with it, they must at least be matters of indifference, and quite unworthy of mention. And when we know, besides, from what he himself tells us elsewhere (vii. 21-23, *al.*), that Jeremiah did not regard matters of ritual as other than quite unessential even in connection with the Sinaitic covenant, surely this renders it highly probable that he did not regard them as having any place at all in connection with the new covenant. But in all that the author of Hebrews says as to the old covenant being typical or antitypical of that spoken of by the prophet Jeremiah, he has in view *exclusively* the ritual system associated with it, expressly assuming that because the old dispensation had ordinances of service and a sanctuary, the new dispensation must likewise have ordinances of service and a sanctuary (ix. 1, *seq.*). In other words, the author of Hebrews takes it for granted that there will be strict parallelism

between the two covenants in matters as to which the prophet gives not the smallest hint that there will be any parallelism, but rather leads us to infer with approximate certainty that there will be none. Such being the case, any attempt to find in the Sinaic covenant, and especially in the ritual ceremonies associated with it, an exact picture of the Gospel dispensation is manifestly doomed beforehand to complete failure. As soon, therefore, as we go into details, we may expect to discover traces everywhere that the writer's typology, in so far as it rests on the passage from Jeremiah, is without the smallest real foundation, and has simply been spun from his own fancy.

It would be too much to assert that the view which our author takes of these two Old Testament passages is the sole ground upon which he proceeds to institute a comparison between the functions of Christ and those of the Aaronic high priest. Rather, it was such a comparison that the author was intent on instituting from the very first, even before he entered on the discussion regarding Melchizedek; and the result of that discussion, though it appears on a strict interpretation to forbid any such comparison, by relegating the priesthood of Christ entirely to His exalted state, where nothing at all resembling the functions of Aaron could possibly be attributed to Him, yet on a looser interpretation it can be construed and made use of as a stepping-stone towards such a comparison, inasmuch as, by proving that Christ is a Priest, it may be held to prove that He discharges functions similar to those of Aaron, agreeably to the author's repeated assertion that "*every high priest, being taken from among men, is appointed for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins*" (v. 1; viii. 3). According to the author of Hebrews, it enters into the very idea of a priest that he be an offerer of sacrifices for sins, and hence the proof that Christ is a Priest is a proof that he must somehow discharge functions similar to those of the Aaronic priests and high priest. This inference cannot be invalidated by the proof that Christ did not become a priest till He had reached the glorified state, where such a thing as the offering of sacrifices for sins must from the nature of the case be absolutely impossible;



nor will any such consideration deter the author from proceeding with the parallel which he is bent on establishing. All that it can do is to apprise later readers like ourselves that the author's typological system, which he has worked out into such curious detail, can be nothing else than the offspring of unmitigated imaginative construction. Indeed, had the consideration that real resemblance between the functions of Christ and those of the Aaronic high priest was impossible in the nature of things been sufficient to deter the author from attempting to make out a fictitious resemblance, the first of the two passages quoted and interpreted in chap. viii. might well have had that effect; for even that passage implies that the priestly functions of Christ must be strictly confined to the exalted glorified state, since the priest, the victim, the blood, &c., must correspond in nature to "the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation" (ix. 11), in which the offering is made. The heavenly tabernacle, to be a tabernacle, must have an altar on which the blood should be offered; and since the altar must be heavenly or spiritual, the blood must be heavenly or spiritual also; which implies that the victim too must be heavenly or spiritual, and the priest likewise, and, in short, everything connected with the offering; that is to say, nothing in the whole transaction can in the nature of things have any resemblance whatever to the offering of an Aaronic priest.

Thus, before the author can take a single step in the way of constructing a typology, he must depart, not only from the view of Christ's priestly functions implied in the oracles relating to Melchizedek, but also from what is practically the same view as implied in the passage upon which his whole typological system is avowedly based. That being so, what a maze of inconsistencies (not to use a stronger word) may we not be prepared to expect in the chapters we are about to examine! The fact that Christ is a priest in any sense of the word can be established only by reading an extravagantly fanciful meaning into Ps. cx. combined with Gen. xiv. 17, *seq.*, so that whatever depends on the writer's exegesis of these two passages must necessarily be fanciful and extravagant. The fact that Christ

is a priest with functions having any resemblance to those of Aaron can be made out only by departing entirely from the meaning extracted from Ps. cx. combined with Gen. xiv. 17, *seq.*, and giving still further play to fancy. The fact that there is a typical heavenly tabernacle like the Mosaic, in which a priest like Aaron might minister, can be rendered plausible only by putting a manifestly impossible meaning upon Ex. xxv. 40, so that whatever is deduced from the writer's exegesis of that passage must needs partake of the same inadmissible character. The fact that the functions of Christ, as minister of the true ideal tabernacle, have any resemblance to those of a priest like Aaron can be sustained only by identifying them, in defiance of the meaning extracted from Ex. xxv. 40, with the events and experiences of His life in the flesh, which happened simply upon earth, and had no manner of connection with a typical heavenly tabernacle like the Mosaic. In other words, the author, in attempting to construct a typology, is obliged at every step, not merely to forsake the historical sense of the Old Testament, and to put upon it a glaringly, and even absurdly, imaginative sense, but, also, as soon as this unhistorical interpretation has been propounded, to forsake it in its turn, and draw still further on his own fancy. Thus we might easily infer *à priori* that the writer's whole typological system was a creation pure and simple of his own imagination, and that it would betray throughout traces of its fanciful origin; and this general antecedent impression will be strongly confirmed as soon as we come to examine it.

## CHAPTER VII.

## FACT AND FIGURE IN THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS—

*Continued.*

IT will be convenient to begin this chapter by bestowing a brief consideration on the section x. 1-18, in which Christ, with his so-called offering, is compared, in a general way, to all or to any of the Old Testament priests and offerings, and where the variety and complication of figure is much less perplexing than we shall find it in chap. ix.

Be it remembered that, on what our author regards as the testimony of the Holy Ghost, "all things" connected with the earthly tabernacle were made according to a pattern shown to Moses in the mount (viii. 5), that pattern being identical with "the heavenly things" (*id.*), being, in fact, "the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation" (ix. 11). The second covenant, equally with the first, has its ordinances of service, and its sanctuary, one of the world to come (vv. 1, 11). Now, in the section before us, the daily offerings of the priests in the outer tabernacle, equally with the annual offering of the high priest in the inner tabernacle, are regarded as copies, though defective ones, of the so-called offering of Christ (x. 11 ; vii. 27). The law, including the whole ritual system, is said to have a shadow or symbolic picture of the good things to come (x. 1), while the priests that offer the gifts according to the law serve that which is a copy and shadow of the heavenly things (viii. 4, 5). The thing offered by Christ is His body (x. 10), in accordance with the declaration of Scripture, "Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body didst Thou prepare for Me ; in whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hadst no pleasure ;

then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do Thy will, O God" (vv. 5-7). The altar on which the body of Jesus was offered can be none other than the cross, for His suffering on the cross without the gate, and His offering Himself or being offered, are once and again identified (ix. 25-28; xiii. 10-13). While the part of the priest is thought of as performed by Jesus Himself, presumably in that nature which He had before coming into the world (x. 5-12). So far the author makes out a certain apparent resemblance between the so-called copy and the supposed original. He has found something corresponding to the victim, something corresponding to the altar, and something corresponding to, at least, a single priest. Differences there are, and these are acknowledged. The priests were many, and Jesus is but one. The priests offered up daily, continually; the body of Jesus was offered once for all (x. 1, 10, 11). This last feature in the Levitical offerings might seem to be quite essential in order to meet the wants of successive generations of men. Our author, however, regards it in no other light than as a proof that such offerings were powerless to take away sins (x. 4), that they could not purify the worshippers (v. 2), could not make perfect them that drew nigh (v. 1). In other words, it is a point of difference inherent in the nature of a mere shadow in contrast to the reality (v. 11). The offering of the body of Jesus Christ avails to take away sins (vv. 4, 11), to make perfect them that draw nigh, purifying (v. 2) or sanctifying (v. 10) the worshippers, so that they have no more consciousness of sins; to perfect for ever them that are sanctified (v. 14)—which is equivalent to remitting (v. 18), or putting away (ix. 26) their sins, while at the same time writing the law on their hearts (x. 16), or giving them repentance from dead works (vi. 1; ix. 14): and, *therefore*, it does not require repetition. So, at least, says our author. But it would surely be much more natural to regard all believers as priests—as, indeed, our author at times appears to do (xiii. 10; x. 22, *seq.*)—for it is certain that each believer enters heaven after having his sins put away and the law written on his heart, after being sanctified, purified, made perfect through sufferings, through dying to sin, in figurative language, through



offering himself, even as Christ did. This would provide a multiplicity of priests and a succession of offerings corresponding to the priests and the offerings of the old economy. It would fall in with the spirit, at least, and the original draft, of the first covenant, for God's original intention was that the whole nation of Israel should be priests (Ex. xix. 6). And, above all, it would obviate the extreme incongruity of representing the entire body of believers, scattered though they be along the whole course of the world's history, as purified from sin, sanctified, and brought into heaven, as it were, by a single act through the death of Christ (x. 10, 14, 18). Our author, however, contemplates for the most part only a single generation of Israelites, it being only a single generation with whom the first covenant was made, and this leads him to represent the people with whom the so-called New Covenant is made under a like form, as if they too consisted of a single generation—a mode of representation which is favoured by the circumstance that he anticipates the end of all things in his own day (ix. 28), whilst he regards the religion of pre-Christian times as having no proper saving validity (x. 1). And as any one of the Old Covenant offerings (*e.g.*, the inaugural offering) did whatever it could do for the whole people together, and in a single moment, the so-called New Covenant offering is likewise represented as producing its effect on those for whom it is designed in a precisely similar way.

But there are other and still more serious inconsistencies involved in the view under consideration. The aim of the writer was to establish a correspondence between the earthly tabernacle, with its altars, its offerings, and its ministers, and a supposed true heavenly tabernacle which the Lord pitched, not man. He believes, on what he regards as the authority of the Holy Ghost, that there is such a tabernacle, and that the earthly tabernacle with its services is a copy of the heavenly. In the earthly tabernacle there are, among other things, a victim, an altar, and an officiating priest, and the author must find equivalents for these. The victim, as we have seen, is identified with the body of Christ, on the supposed authority of Scripture, or of the Holy Ghost speaking in

Scripture. This implies that the altar must be the cross, and probably also that the offering of Jesus must be regarded as equivalent to the daily offerings of the ordinary priests in the first tabernacle. So far the original is made out by the help of Scripture, history, and the nature of the copy. But what kind of original? A heavenly original? No such thing. The ritual system of the Old Covenant is not here a copy of things in the heavens at all, but a copy of things on earth. The victim represents an earthly thing, the body of Christ. The altar represents an earthly thing, the cross. The cross was situated on Calvary, and the altar within the tabernacle: since, therefore, the altar represents the cross, the tabernacle must represent Calvary, or, at the least, something earthly. The priest, too, must be on earth to make the offering, though the author elsewhere expressly affirms that if Jesus were on earth, He would not be a priest at all (viii. 4). The blood of the slaughtered victim does not here represent something in heaven that avails to purify heavenly things (ix. 23), but something on earth that can avail only to purify earthly things (v. 12). Here, therefore, Jesus is not, by any means, "a Minister of the [heavenly] holy place, and of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, not man" (viii. 1). Nor would the author himself have the hardihood to allege that the Mosaic tabernacle was copied from Mount Calvary, and the altar within it from the cross of Christ, and that Moses saw both these things on Mount Sinai!

How has the author so strangely and so completely deserted his former idea, founded, as it was, on the express testimony of the Holy Ghost, that *all things* connected with the earthly tabernacle were made according to the pattern shown to Moses in the mount, and that Jesus is a Minister of the ideal heavenly tabernacle? Is it in deference to what he regards as a second contradictory testimony of the Holy Ghost, that the body of Jesus was prepared to assume the place of sacrifice and offering, and to do what sacrifice and offering could not do—sanctify us?

If the existing Hebrew text of Ps. xl. be correct, as there is every reason to believe that it is, not only is the meaning which our author puts upon the passage which he quotes

flagrantly unhistorical, but the reading which he has adopted from the LXX. is a flagrant corruption of the proper text, due to the ignorance, the prejudice, or the carelessness of the original translator, or of a later transcriber. The passage as it stands in the Hebrew Bible may be translated thus:—“Sacrifice and offering Thou hast no delight in; ears hast Thou digged for me” [cf. “Hath the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as He hath in obeying (lit. hearing) the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey (lit. hear) is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams” (1 Sam. xv. 22)]. Burnt offering and sin offering hast Thou not required; then said I, Lo I am come, with the roll of the book written unto me [= the law which Thou requirest me to obey], I delight to do Thy will, O my God; yea, Thy law [= the purport of “the book written unto me”] is within my heart” (Ps. xl. 6-8). The meaning of these words is evident on the face of them. The writer knows and desires to give expression to the fact that, in the estimation of God, obedience is of greatly more value than sacrifice. God requires and delights in obedience, whereas sacrifice is, at the best, a matter of indifference. And accordingly the writer goes on to profess his readiness and willingness to obey the law and do the will of God. When he says, “Ears hast Thou digged for me,” or “Mine ears hast Thou opened,” his meaning is that God has given him the power and inclination to hear,—*i.e.*, to obey the law, so that he is able to say, “Lo, I am come, with the roll of the book written unto me; I delight to do Thy will, O my God; yea, Thy law is within my heart.” The whole connection of ideas, especially when viewed in the light of the parallel passage from 1 Samuel, renders it perfectly certain that the reading of the Hebrew text is correct, and that the general sense of the passage is what has been stated. The psalm is not probably a very early one, and the writer is evidently speaking throughout of himself and himself alone. There is no reason whatever to think that the psalm, as a whole or any part of it, refers directly or indirectly to “the Messiah;” on the contrary, such a reference is plainly excluded by the whole tenor of the language used, which is entirely homogeneous, being spoken throughout of the same individual, and

in particular by the statement of v. 12, "Innumerable evils have compassed me about; *mine iniquities have overtaken me*, so that I am unable to look up; *they are more than the hairs of mine head*, and my heart hath failed me"—a statement which amounts to a *reductio ad absurdum* of the Messianic interpretation. On the other hand, when the LXX. transmogrify the expression "Ears hast Thou digged for me" into "A body didst Thou prepare for me," this can only be regarded as a piece of manifest and notorious bungling. How they succeeded in so completely missing or modifying the sense of the Hebrew—whether they had before them ours or a different corrupted form of the text—that is, whether their error be one of translation or of textual criticism—and what particular meaning they intended to convey by the words they employ—or whether (as is most probable) they merely set down words without realising to themselves any distinct meaning—these are questions that hardly concern us here. That the LXX. translators had no idea of the meaning which the author of Hebrews reads into the passage may be taken as certain, since that meaning is so extremely artificial, and so thoroughly alien to every possible or conceivable historical meaning, that the probabilities are almost infinite against its occurring to any mind but his own. He interprets the words as if they had been spoken directly by Christ regarding Himself at the time when He became incarnate—identifying the "coming" with the entrance of Christ into the world—and he infers, from the fact that sacrifices and offerings are first mentioned as not being acceptable to God, and then the coming of Christ with a body prepared for Him, that "He [= Christ, who speaks] taketh away the first [= the Mosaic sacrifices] that he may establish the second [= the sacrifice of His own body], according to the will of God" (v. 10). So that the doing of the will of God, instead of consisting in general obedience to the law of God, is made to consist in the offering by Christ of His own body as a sacrifice,—this in spite of the psalmist's pointed declaration that God has no delight in sacrifices of any kind! Even if the LXX. text were assumed to be correct, a more arbitrary interpretation than this could scarcely be conceived. There is not the re-



motest hint or suggestion in the text of all or any of the ideas which the passage is said to contain ; they have simply been imported into it from without, and owe their existence solely to the subjectivity of the interpreter. What wonder, therefore, that when the author comes to apply the results of his exegesis of the present passage, he finds himself, or rather is found by us, irreconcilably in conflict with the results of his exegesis of the two passages previously quoted ?

Still, it is not to be supposed that the identification of Christ's priestly functions with the experiences of His earthly instead of with those of His heavenly life is due merely, or even mainly, to the author's misinterpretation of the passage quoted from Ps. xl. The fact that the quotation appears in the middle of chap. x. instead of at the opening of chap. ix. is a sufficient proof that the construction put upon it is the effect rather than the cause of the writer's attempt to identify the priestly functions of Christ, and that the reason of the above-noted inconsistency lies deeper. The author has already proved from Scripture that Jesus became a Priest on passing from the earthly to the heavenly state, so that His priestly functions must be exercised exclusively in the heavenly world, while seated at God's right hand. Now, when we add to this idea of the priesthood of Christ the other idea—itself also founded on Scripture—that the earthly tabernacle in all its parts was copied from a heavenly original, the two ideas seem at the first blush to hang together perfectly well. To identify Jesus with the Priest or High Priest of the original heavenly tabernacle occurs at once, and so the writer affirms, "We have such an High Priest as sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister of the [heavenly] holy place, and of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, not man." But, in asserting that Christ is a Priest, the minister of an ideal heavenly tabernacle, the writer has laid himself under obligation to go a step farther and give some account of the priestly *functions* of Christ, and as soon as he attempts to do this serious difficulties arise. The only function ascribed to Jesus in His exalted state is the function of intercession on behalf of His people, a function which, as it must have begun to be exercised from the foundation of the world, so it will

continue to be exercised to its consummation, or even, it may be, to all eternity (vii. 25). But such a process of intercession extending throughout the whole course of the world's history bears no sort of resemblance to the actions of the Aaronic priests in the earthly tabernacle. It agrees, indeed, so far with the notion of an ideal heavenly tabernacle, which must be supposed to have existed from all eternity, and to which our author has given countenance on the alleged authority of Scripture, uttered by the Holy Ghost; but then it does not at all agree with the notion that Jesus became *a priest* on sitting down at God's right hand, at least if the author's own definition of a priest be correct—viz., that "every priest, being taken from among men, is appointed for men in things pertaining to God, *that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins*" (v. 1; cf. viii. 3; x. 11); and yet this latter notion is likewise put forward on the alleged authority of the Holy Ghost speaking in Scripture. Intercession is a function that might just as readily be exercised by any other person as by a priest, and for which a tabernacle was not in the least necessary. Moreover, if the heavenly tabernacle be that from which the earthly was copied, it must at least contain an altar, since nothing about the earthly tabernacle was more prominent than its altars. And an altar would be meaningless without a slaughtered victim, to offer which was the special function of the earthly priest. Yet it is needless to say that Jesus, in His exalted state, neither does nor can do anything having the faintest resemblance to such an action. In heaven there is no altar, no victim, no slaughter, no sprinkling of blood, no entrance into a holy place; so that any attempt to identify the proper priestly functions of Jesus with the actions or experiences of His exalted state is condemned as futile beforehand.

What then does the author do? Not finding anything in heaven corresponding to the earthly tabernacle and to the priestly actions associated with it, he must of course give up seeking such things there. Heaven is the region of spiritual relations, and spiritual relations must from their very nature differ *toto cælo* from physical acts. As long, therefore, as the so-called priestly work of Christ is strictly confined to heaven,

it is hopeless to think of making out any parallel between it and the work of the Old Testament priests; while, if the work of Christ bear no resemblance whatever to that of the Old Testament priests, the question is really of very little moment or interest whether He should be called a priest at all, and whether His work in heaven should be regarded as priestly work or not. If, however, the sphere of Christ's priestly work could be removed from heaven to earth, if His priestly character could be projected back into His earthly life, in that case it might be possible to make out something in the nature of a parallel between certain palpable experiences of Jesus and the distinctive actions of the Aaronic priests. So to project the priesthood of Christ backward is indeed a very violent proceeding, for it is to depart entirely from the Melchizedek view of the priesthood of Christ, and so to depart from the express declarations of Scripture. Not only is there no Scripture warrant for regarding Christ as a priest while on earth, but the author has himself proved that Christ was made a Priest by the word of the oath on His sitting down at God's right hand (vii. 20, 21); nay, he has even expressly asserted that if Christ were on earth He would not be a Priest at all, seeing there are already those that offer the gifts according to the law, and serve that which is a copy and shadow of the heavenly things (viii. 4, 5). The last statement evidently implies that whatever priestly actions are done must be done either on earth in immediate connection with the earthly Mosaic tabernacle, or in heaven in immediate connection with the tabernacle of which the Mosaic is a copy. But the experiences undergone by Christ while on earth were connected with neither of these; they could not, therefore, be priestly at all. Besides, to remove the priestly work of Christ from heaven to earth, has the effect, as we before remarked, of making the ritual system of the Old Covenant no longer a copy of things in heaven, but of things on earth. The blood of Christ, for example, is not a heavenly but an earthly thing, a thing just as thoroughly gross and carnal as the blood of bulls and goats. Even were it applied, it would no more make perfect the worshippers as touching the conscience than the meats and drinks and divers washings of the ritual system (ix. 10). It

could not possibly be carried into heaven, nor sprinkled on a heavenly mercy-seat ; though it is right to say that our author himself hardly contemplates such a sprinkling and offering of it. What he thinks of is its being sprinkled on the hearts or consciences of the people. But even so, the command to sprinkle it would be but an "ordinance of flesh" (ix. 10); the blood itself could be applied only to the flesh ; and if it sanctified at all, it would sanctify only to the purity of the flesh. It follows, too, on the same system, that the altar must just be the cross—which, again, is a purely earthly thing ; that the whole sanctuary must be on earth and earthly ; and that the priest who ministers in such a sanctuary, and handles such earthly physical blood, must be an earthly man that dies. In short, the author's attempt to make out the heavenly original of which the earthly ritual system is a copy, by seeking it in the earthly instead of the heavenly life of Jesus, completely subverts the very thing which it is meant to establish. It begins by flatly contradicting the alleged teaching of the author's first Scripture quotation, that the priesthood of Christ was of a heavenly order like that of Melchizedek, and ends by as flatly contradicting the alleged teaching of his second quotation, that the earthly tabernacle in all its parts was made after an ideal heavenly pattern ; and, as we shall see presently, the author makes out after all only the rudest and most defective parallel in the world between the actions of Jesus and those—any of those—of the Aaronic priests.

Still, there are but two alternatives : a parallel to the ritual system must be sought, either in the earthly life of Jesus, or not at all ; and our author prefers the former of these alternatives to the latter. Accordingly, he identifies the victim with the physical body of Jesus ; the slaughter of the victim with the physical death of Jesus ; the blood of the victim with the physical blood of Jesus ; while Jesus Himself, presumably in His inner Divine nature, is identified with the priest, and the whole body of believers with the people. In this way, everything that Jesus either has done from the foundation of the world, or will yet do to all eternity, on behalf of the human race—whether *mediately*, that is, on His own person directly, with indirect reference to the whole



world, or *immediately*, that is, on the persons of believers directly—is massed together, and practically identified with the act of His physical death. Even His life-long sufferings are left entirely out of account; His sole function is to offer His body (x. 10), to offer Himself, or be offered through death (ix. 27, 28); and his work, as so represented, is strictly limited in its reference to “the people” (ii. 17; xiii. 12), meaning believers, who are regarded as being perfectly sanctified by the act of Christ’s physical death (x. 14), in like manner as the whole people of Israel were imperfectly sanctified by the act of offering up their victim. What commentators and dogmatists say as to the sacrifice of Christ having to do only with *guilt* (as distinguished from sin) is all nonsense. The epistle says not one word from beginning to end about guilt. It speaks only of “sin” (ix. 26), or “sins” (x. 12), “the sins of many” (ix. 28), “the transgressions under the first covenant,” which stand in the way of eternally inheriting the promise (v. 15), “dead works,” springing from an evil (iii. 12; x. 22), impenitent, unrenewed (vi. 1, 6), unrighteous (viii. 10) heart, which stand in the way of serving the “living” God (ix. 14), as the saints do in heaven. The sacrifice of Christ perfects for ever them that are sanctified (x. 14), by redeeming them from all transgressions (ix. 15), in and through writing the law on their hearts (viii. 10; x. 16), so that they obtain the eternal inheritance, in the enjoyment of which they perfectly serve the living God (ix. 14, 15). It sanctifies not to the purity of the flesh, but of the heart (x. 22) of the worshipper, so that he is no longer conscious of sins (v. 2), or dead works (ix. 14), but only of works well-pleasing to God (xi. 6). It does what repentance or renewal does inwardly and really, what baptism does outwardly and symbolically, what faith or obedience to the truth does instrumentally—purifies the heart or spirit from sin (vi. 1, 2; x. 22, *cf.* Acts xv. 9; 1 Pet. i. 22). In this epistle, as, indeed, everywhere in the New Testament, *remission* (ἄφεσις) of sins is conditioned by *repentance* (μετάνοια), and is identified with *redemption* (ἀπολύτρωσις); that is to say, it is directly dependent on renewal of the mind or heart, and carries along with it the removal of sin itself, as well as the guilt or legal consequence of sin. In

fact, guilt is nothing but the relation of sin to the law, and that relation can be removed only by the removal of the thing related. Sin, to exist at all, must attach to or inhere in some individuality—in his flesh, in his heart, or consciousness; and the individual in whom sin inheres is liable to the penalty of the law, that is, he is *guilty* (ἔνοχος, cf. ii. 15; Jas. ii. 10). If an individual be sinful in any sense, or to any extent, he must be guilty in the same sense and to the same extent. Now, to sanctify, purify, and make perfect such an individual does not and cannot mean to remove the relation (ἔνοχος), while the related person (ἁματωλός), or thing (ἁμαρτία), remains precisely as before. Such an idea is really perfectly absurd. What a preposterous abuse of language would it be to say that an individual was not only sanctified [= made holy], or purified [= made pure], but *made perfect for ever* [= freed eternally from all defect], while all the sin he ever had was still attaching to him, still inhering in his flesh, in his heart, or consciousness! If sanctification, purification, or perfecting covers merely the removal of guilt, but does not touch the sin itself, then on what principle, and in what connection is the sin itself removed? When does the perfected sanctification of each believer from guilt take place, and when his perfected sanctification from sin, and what relation subsists between the two? Is the believer perfectly sanctified from guilt in the first moment of faith? But it can easily be proved that believers require remission, not of sin merely, but of guilt as well, during their whole earthly life. Has the sacrifice of Christ no bearing on this guilt? Does it remove the guilt accumulated at conversion and nothing more? Surely if the sacrifice of Christ bear on the guilt of men at all, it must bear equally on the *whole* of each man's guilt; and since daily remission of sin goes hand in hand with daily repentance in the experience of the believer, it is plain that the removal of guilt is possible only through the removal of sin from the heart or *mind* (μετάνοια). When the writer twice quotes the words of Jeremiah, "Their sins will I remember no more" (viii. 12; x. 17), he means, not that God will overlook the guilt of sin that still clings to His people, but that He will forget the guilt of sin that has been removed or remitted in the process of

writing the law on their hearts (viii. 10 ; x. 16). And that both these processes—the writing of the law on their hearts as well as the removal of sin that accompanies it—are included in the effect of Christ's offering is evident from the connection of thought in x. 14-18. The offering of Christ no more requires to be supplemented by some additional process for purifying the heart than the offering of bulls and goats required to be supplemented by some additional process for purifying the flesh. Indeed, the very fact that a parallel is drawn between the defilement of the flesh which the blood of bulls and goats sufficed to remove, and the defilement of the heart which the blood of Christ removes, is enough to prove that not the guilt of sin, but sin itself is put away by the offering of Christ. Mere guilt, being a relation simply, could hardly be said to *defile* ; as little, therefore, could it be said to be *purified* in like manner as the filth of the flesh is purified. Besides, supposing that the whole of the believer's pre-Christian guilt were removed in the initial act of faith, yet, unless the sin itself were at the same time removed, it would speedily multiply and produce defilement or guilt anew, —in which case it could not be said that “the worshippers, having been once purified, have no more consciousness of sins” (x. 2), that “by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified” (v. 14). The only way in which the believer, while in a state of sinfulness, could conceivably be in a state of perpetual guiltlessness would be through his possessing imputed holiness, imputed purity, imputed perfection ; that is to say, the notion that guilt can be separated from the sin whose relation to law it expresses, from the sinful person to whom it belongs, and dealt with independently, is just a phase of the theory of imputation, implying, as it does, the whole machinery of imputed sin, imputed righteousness, imputed holiness, imputed purity, imputed perfection, &c. &c., of which there is not one vestige of evidence anywhere in the epistle. Such a theory, if applied with consistency, would lead inevitably, not only to imputed incarnation on the part of Christ, but to imputed possession of heaven on the part of the believer. Sanctification, purification, or perfecting is the sole condition of entrance into the holy place (x. 19), that is,

into heaven; and if the holiness communicated be merely imputed, the heaven entered must likewise be merely imputed. If it be true that without holiness no man shall see the Lord (xii. 14), it is also true that with holiness every man shall see the Lord; and if the holiness be imputed or vicarious, the seeing of the Lord must be imputed or vicarious also. But it is, perhaps, unfair to occupy the time of the reader in refuting an idea so evidently erroneous.

The work of Christ, then, is thrown into the form as it is couched in the phraseology of the old covenant sacrifice. Yet it is only familiarity, and the constant habit of speaking of Christ as a Priest, and of His work as a sacrifice, that prevents us from seeing how exceedingly different the two things are. After all our author's straining to make out a parallel, after he has ransacked heaven and earth to find equivalents in the life of Jesus for the distinctive actions of the Aaronic priests, he is still very far from successful. For there is hardly any resemblance between the death of Jesus through crucifixion at the hands of Roman soldiers and the offering of a victim in sacrifice by the hand of a Jewish high priest. The several details in the ceremony of sacrifice were not always the same, but in general they were such as these:—The priest and the victim were invariably quite distinct from each other, and the latter was always a brute creature; only in heathen or semi-heathen sacrifices do we meet with the offering of intelligent human beings. The victim was slain either by the priest or by the person on whose behalf the offering was made, and the main point in the act of offering consisted in sprinkling, or in some way pouring, the blood about the altar, an action which was invariably performed by the priest. The altar was a piece of furniture expressly made for the purpose of offering, was situated in a sanctuary or place of worship, and the whole ceremony was strictly and consciously an act of worship. Jesus, on the other hand, was put to death by Roman soldiers at the instance of a Jewish mob, but the author makes as little pretence of regarding the former as priests as he does of regarding the latter as worshippers. On the contrary, the priest is identified with Jesus Himself, with the result that priest and victim are no longer distinct from each other.



Yet Jesus did not put Himself to death, nor sprinkle His blood on or about an altar. His blood was not even shed till some time after His death, when it would have been worthless for purposes of sacrifice. There was no altar to sprinkle blood upon, no sanctuary wherein to worship, none but a murderous mocking crowd to do the part of worshippers. Even on His own part the death of Jesus was an act of worship in no other sense than every act of His life was an act of worship. Thus almost the only point common to the Jewish sacrifice and the death of Christ is the point of violent death; everything else connected with the two things is totally different; and even on this single point the resemblance is more apparent than real, for the death of Christ, unlike that of the Jewish victim, was but the culminating step of a process that had been going on during His whole life. In the proper literal sense, the death of Christ was not a sacrifice at all. It was literally a *crucifixion*—nothing more, and nothing less. It was just the ordinary Roman process of putting the lowest class of criminals to death. The crucifixion of Jesus was no more a sacrifice than the crucifixion of each of the malefactors by his side was a sacrifice. The process in each of the three cases was exactly the same, and if the one was properly sacrificial, the others must have been properly sacrificial also.

We shall be told, of course, that it is by no means pretended that the death of Jesus resembled in its outward form an ordinary act of sacrifice, nor that the part played by Jesus, in connection with His own death, resembled that of an ordinary priest, but only that Christ's death *in its inner essence* was sacrificial, and therefore is properly spoken of as a sacrifice, and that the part played by Christ while suffering death *in its inner essence* was priestly, on which account He is properly called a Priest. But when men use the words sacrifice and priest, it is really necessary that they should ask themselves what they mean. To what purpose is it that we go on repeating such terms, unless we have some definite and distinct notion behind them? In common speech, and certainly in the language of our epistle (v. 1; viii. 3), the word sacrifice, when associated with the word priest as its correlative, is used to denote the offering of a slain victim on

an altar as an act of religious worship ; and the word priest is applied to the person who officiates in such an act. What do these words mean when applied to the crucifixion of Christ, and to Christ Himself in the act of His crucifixion ? They cannot possibly bear their ordinary senses, because, as we have seen, the only thing common to an ordinary sacrifice and the crucifixion of Christ is the fact of a violent death. Shall we say that the death of Christ was essentially sacrificial because it consisted in the surrender of His life to God ? But in this sense every death that ever took place must have been sacrificial, for, if we may trust the author of Ecclesiastes, when the dust returns to the earth as it was, the spirit returns to God who gave it (xii. 7). Certainly every Christian martyr's death would be a sacrifice, and every persecuted, murdered Christian a priest. In that case, sacrifice would mean nothing less or more than murder ; priest would mean nothing less or more than murdered man. Shall we say that, when we apply the word sacrifice to the death of Christ, we use it in an altogether special sense to denote such a death as the Son of God suffered on Calvary on behalf of sinful men ? But here the word sacrifice really tells us nothing as to the nature of Christ's death, and therefore had better not be used at all. The statement that the death of Christ was a sacrifice amounts to nothing more or less than this, that the death of Christ was the death of Christ. Shall we say, then, that the death of Christ was properly sacrificial because it effected or shall effect really what the Levitical sacrifices aimed to effect but could not ? But surely it does not follow that because two sets of means aim at the same end, the one unsuccessfully, the other successfully, therefore they are essentially identical, and ought to be called by the same name. The mere fact that the one as completely failed as the other completely succeeds is enough to prove that the two must be very different, and ought to be called by different names. According to Paul and the present writer, the aim of the Gospel is identical with that of the law—to make men righteous or holy ; but it does not follow that the Gospel is in any proper sense of the word a *law* ; on the contrary, since the Gospel makes men righteous or holy, which the law utterly failed to do, it rather follows that the Gospel

is something entirely different from the law, that it is *not* a law in the proper sense of the word. Now the Levitical sacrifice and the death of Christ are but parts of the law scheme of salvation and the Gospel scheme of salvation respectively; it is only to be expected, therefore, that the two should be wholly different, and should operate in different ways; and the slightest examination shows that this is really the case.

According to our author, what the Old Testament sacrifices failed to effect, but what, nevertheless, they must be supposed to have aimed at effecting, was the remission (ix. 22), which means the purification (i. 3), or annihilation (ix. 26), or removal (v. 28; x. 4) of sin. The Old Testament gifts and sacrifices could not, as touching the conscience, make the worshipper perfect (ix. 9), could not purify the worshippers so that they should have no more consciousness of sins (x. 2), could not take away sins (vv. 4, 11), and thereby sanctify the people (vv. 10, 14). They could only sanctify or purify the flesh (ix. 13). The laws enjoining them were therefore but carnal (ix. 10), weak, profitless (vii. 18) ordinances. All the same, however, these gifts and sacrifices were offered for sins (v. 1, 3; vii. 27; ix. 7). In our author's judgment, the object aimed at in the Levitical sacrifices was to bring about the remission (ix. 22; x. 18), or redemption (ix. 12, 15), or purification (vv. 22, 23), or taking away (x. 4, 11) of sins—to sanctify (ix. 13; x. 10, 14), or purify (ix. 14; x. 2), or make perfect (ix. 9; x. 1, 14) the worshippers, as touching the heart, or conscience, or whole nature, mind and body (x. 16, 22). Once and once only he uses the expression "*expiate* (*ἱλάσκεισθαι*) the sins of the people" to describe the effect of sacrifice (ii. 17); but the immediate context and the whole tenor of the epistle (witness the passages just referred to) render it perfectly certain that our author understands the expression in exactly the same sense as the other expressions cited above. It does not point to a mere change in the mind of God that of itself constitutes a new relation of God to man, such as might be described by the word "propitious," and that is unaccompanied, or at least unconditioned, by any corresponding change in the mind of man himself. Rather, it

points to a change in the mind or nature of man that underlies and conditions the mutually altered relation between man and God which we call "reconciliation,"—a change that is elsewhere spoken of as redemption, remission, removal, abolition of sins, sanctification, purification, perfecting, or glorification. If the word "expiate" expressed a mere change in the mind of God, forming the basis of a new relation of God to man, this would imply that the relation of God to the whole world, or (as some would say) to the elect, was completely altered at the time when Christ died; whereas there is not a shred of evidence, either in this epistle or elsewhere in the New Testament, that the relation of God to any man is in the least altered—or, rather, there is decisive evidence that it is *not* in the least altered—till the moment of faith and repentance, when the nature of the man himself has already been changed. Christ is no doubt spoken of as "the *expiation* (*ἱλασμός*) for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world" (1 John ii. 2; iv. 10), and as "an *expiatory sacrifice*" (*ἱλαστήριον*, Rom. iii. 25); but then he is an *expiation* or an *expiatory sacrifice* only "through faith," and "in [= sprinkled with] his blood" (*id.*), that is, through faith which appropriates the Divine Spirit (Eph. i. 13), as the instrument of redemption (*id.* v. 13, 14; iv. 30; Rom. iii. 24; 1 Pet. i. 18), including death with Christ to sin and resurrection with Christ to righteousness (Rom. vi. 4); or remission of sins (Eph. i. 7; Col. i. 14); or sanctification (1 Cor. i. 30; vi. 11; 2 Thess. ii. 13; Eph. v. 26; Heb. xiii. 12, &c.); or purification (Acts xv. 9; 2 Cor. vii. 1; Eph. v. 26; Tit. ii. 14; 1 John i. 7, 9; Heb. ix. 14, &c.); or glorification (2 Cor. iii. 18; Rom. viii. 21-23, &c.). Whether this be the proper historical sense of the word "expiate," as used in the Greek version of the Old Testament, is perhaps questionable, though very weighty evidence can certainly be produced to prove that it is,\* but there is no doubt whatever that this is the sense put upon it by one and all of the New Testament writers. The mere fact that the blood of Christ requires to be applied to

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\* Cf. Lev. xvi. 15-19, where the words "purify" and "sanctify" are used as synonyms for "expiate" or "atone," and where places and things are said to be purified, sanctified, or atoned.



believers so as to purify them is sufficient to prove that the change of relation between men and God, implied in the expiation of sin, is constituted by a change on the persons of men themselves.

Such, then, is the nature of the end aimed at alike by the Levitical sacrifices and by the so-called sacrifice of Christ. It includes and covers the total removal of sin from the persons of the whole people with reference to whom the sacrifice is offered. But how infinitely different are the means or methods employed to reach this end in the two cases! The Levitical sacrifice had a direct bearing on the body of people who were present then and there when it was offered, and it had no bearing whatever on any one else; the so-called sacrificial death of Christ had a direct bearing on His own person, and on that only; it had an indirect bearing not only on all believers but on all men—whether ultimately believers or not—in every age of the world's history. The Levitical sacrifice produced its effect—a single direct immediate effect—in the physical act of offering; it produced its effect on the whole people at once; its virtue was completely spent as soon as the blood touched the altar, or, if sprinkled on the people, as soon as the priest had sprinkled it on those present then and there. The so-called sacrificial death of Christ produces no effect whatever on the whole people at once—neither on the world generally, nor yet on the elect; its sole immediate effect is on the person of Christ Himself, and even here it forms but a single step in the lifelong process of His personal sanctification, in the course which he had to traverse before reaching perfection; its virtue, or rather the virtue of the entire process of which it forms a part, or, to speak still more correctly, the virtue of the *person* who undergoes that entire process, began to be spent from the very foundation of the world, and will be completely spent only at its consummation, when the sins of the many shall have been done away (ix. 26), when the transgressions under the first covenant have been redeemed (v. 15), only at the last resurrection, the end, the second coming (1 Cor. xv. 23, *seq.*; Heb. ix. 28), when all the enemies of Christ, even death and the devil, have been brought to nought (1 Cor. xv. 26; Heb. ii. 14), and when all

the slaves of sin and Satan have become perfected, glorified sons (1 Cor. xv. 55-57; Heb. ii. 10, 15; x. 12-14), in a word, when the all things have been summed up in Christ (Eph. i. 10), or subjected to Christ (1 Cor. xv. 27), and so subjected to man in Christ (Heb. ii. 8). In the case of the Levitical sacrifices, a momentary outward physical act, performed by an earthly perishing man, on a limited number of people, at a particular time, in a particular place, accomplished, and could from its very nature accomplish, only a purely physical result; in the case of the so-called sacrifice of Christ, a lifelong inward spiritual process, wrought by the eternal Spirit of God, on an indefinite number of people, in all nations, and throughout all ages, accomplishes from its very nature a glorious spiritual result. In short, the physical act of baptism through a human agent is not more utterly different from the spiritual process of renewal through the agency of the Spirit of God, than the Levitical symbolical method of sanctifying outwardly and in the flesh the whole people of Israel is different from the Christian ideally valid method of sanctifying in heart and conscience the whole body of believers. There is no doubt a physical death on the part of Christ, or rather there is a countless number of physical deaths on the part of all believers (including Christ), forming a step or steps in the Christian process corresponding in some degree to the death of the victim in the Levitical action; but there is also a physical burial on the part of all believers (including Christ), forming a step or steps in the process of renewal corresponding in some degree to the immersion into the water in the act of baptism. It would, therefore, be just as reasonable to say that the process of renewal in the individual believer is through a literal baptism, performed by Christ as minister, as it would be to say that the process of sanctification in the whole body of believers is through a literal sacrifice, offered by Christ as priest. Indeed, it would be more reasonable in the latter case than in the former; for (1) the analogy between the many acts of baptism resulting in physical purification and the many processes of renewal resulting in spiritual purification is, if anything, closer than the analogy between the single physical action of offering a victim whereby the whole people of

Israel were abortively sanctified, and the many spiritual processes of dying to sin and rising again to righteousness, whereby the whole body of believers (Christ included) are really sanctified; and (2) we know for certain that the physical action of baptism was expressly instituted to represent the spiritual process of renewal in the individual believer, whereas it is doubtful in the extreme whether the physical action of sacrifice was instituted to represent the spiritual process of sanctification from all sin in the whole body of believers. On this last point there is no evidence whatever in the Old Testament, while the New Testament evidence is of a kind that cannot be accepted in its entirety, and therefore ought not to be accepted at all; it is the fruit of the method of Old Testament exegesis then current, which, if adopted by any modern writer on his own account, and apart from Rabbinical precedent, would at once be scouted as ridiculous, or passed by as unworthy of the smallest attention. Thus, therefore, since it is utterly preposterous to say that the method of renewal to righteousness in the individual believer is a literal baptism, it is utterly and equally, or rather it is still more preposterous, to say that the method of sanctification from sin in the whole body of believers is a literal sacrifice. Not to repeat here the fact already alluded to that the death of Christ had a bearing on the whole world, and not merely on the whole body of believers—a fact to which there is nothing in the least parallel in the Levitical sacrifices, which bore on “the people,” on all of them equally, and on them only.

Continuing our discussion of the figurative language of the Epistle to the Hebrews, we have now to ask what corresponds in the original heavenly tabernacle which the Lord pitched, not man, to the two divisions, outer and inner, of the earthly tabernacle, and to the services of priests and high priest connected with each of these respectively. We have seen that the so-called sacrifice of Christ is sometimes, and more particularly in the section x. 1-18, represented as corresponding in a general way to any one or to all of the Levitical “sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin”

(x. 8), that in this case Christ Himself corresponds not to the high priest merely, but to the ordinary priests, who minister daily in the first tabernacle, that the victim is identified with the body of Christ, in accordance with a specific declaration of Scripture, which has no doubt helped to determine the whole of the present point of view, and that the daily and yearly repetition of the same sacrifices is viewed as a proof that such sacrifices could not accomplish the end at which they aimed, could not "take away sins," or "make perfect them that drew nigh." It is not meant that Christ is represented as corresponding *exclusively* to the ordinary priests, or His offering *exclusively* to the daily offerings in the first tabernacle; but rather, since Christ and His offering are here thought of as corresponding generally to *all* the priests and *all* the offerings of the law—that the ordinary priests and the daily offerings are at least not excluded from that which Christ represents; nay, that in the section referred to, they occupy the place of prominence, overshadowing and shutting out of view everything special to the high priest and his annual entrance into the holy place. But now the question arises, Why should there be a holy place at all? And why should it be entered by the high priest alone, and only once in the year? What in the region of heavenly things has given rise to a ceremonial so well defined in the region of earthly things? Surely a place and actions fenced by boundaries and regulations so specific cannot be without some special significance, and cannot be without a definite equivalent in the ideal tabernacle.

The force of this question is distinctly felt by our author, for he attempts a solution in the section ix. 1-10. Chapter ix. opens with the remark that "the first covenant also [as well as the second, whose nature has just been described (viii. 8-13)] had ordinances of service, and its sanctuary, one of this world [in contrast to the other world sanctuary of the second covenant]. Then follows a detailed account of the whole tabernacle, giving the principal pieces of furniture in each of the two divisions, and the author proceeds:—"Now, these things having been thus prepared, the priests go in continually into the first tabernacle accomplishing the services; but into the second



the high priest alone, once in the year, not without blood which he offereth for himself, and for the errors of the people; the Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holy place hath not yet been made manifest, while the first tabernacle is yet standing—which is a parable for the present time, according to which [parable] are offered both gifts and sacrifices, which cannot, as touching the conscience, make the worshipper perfect" (vv. 6-9).

According to this passage, the holy place or second tabernacle was framed under the guidance of the Holy Ghost to furnish a visible parabolic representation of the future heavenly world-period with its spiritual ministers and services, while the first tabernacle was intended to furnish a kindred parabolic representation (*παραβολή*, v. 9) of the present earthly world-period with its fleshly ministers and services. And the fact that all the priests entered continually into the first tabernacle accomplishing the services or acts of worship (*τὰς λατρείας*, v. 6), whilst into the second tabernacle the high priest alone entered, and that but once in the year, with blood to offer for the sins of the whole people, this fact was meant by the Holy Ghost to indicate or symbolically represent "that the way into the holy place hath not yet been manifested (*πεφανερωσθαι*), while the first tabernacle is yet standing" (v. 8), in other words, that heaven with the heavenly things has not yet been revealed (Rom. viii. 18, 19, *seq.*), or manifested (*φανερωθῆναι*, 1 John iii. 2), while earth and the earthly things still continue. The close parallelism between the present passage and the passage x. 18-23 enables us to supplement the figure, and explain how the manifestation (*φανερώσις*) of the way into the holy place is conceived to take place. That which covered and concealed the holy place was the veil, which barred the way, so that the high priest alone could enter, and even he not continually, but only for a moment once in the year. And the revelation or manifestation of the holy place, or of the way into the holy place, takes place through the rending of the veil; when that is done, the way is open for constant access and worship, not to the high priest alone, but to all the priests, or people, or worshippers (x. 19). The veil is identified with the flesh of Christ (v. 20), the rending of which is thought of as

practically coinciding with the taking down of the first tabernacle (ix. 8), that is, with the consummation of the ages (v. 26), the times of the restoration of all things (Acts iii. 21), the time of reformation (Heb. ix. 10), of regeneration (Matt. xix. 28), when Christ shall appear a second time apart from sin unto salvation (Heb. ix. 28). The destruction of Christ's earthly body of flesh, the destruction of Jerusalem with its temple, its earthly ritual system, its fleshly ordinances (v. 10), and the destruction of "this creation" generally (xii. 27; Rom. viii. 19-22), are all thought of as practically coinciding, and as together giving place to that new, better, heavenly creation which is still in course of coming to the birth (*συνωδίνει, id.*, v. 22); and they are all regarded as symbolically represented by the first tabernacle, of which the veil was the inner wall; so that when the first tabernacle is taken down or destroyed, heaven or the holy place is made manifest.

Such is the author's attempt to account for the two divisions of the Mosaic tabernacle, and for the specific officers and actions connected with each. That he attributes it to the Holy Ghost is a matter of course. It is quite evident that we have here an entirely different typological system from that with which we have just been dealing, and one, if possible, still more arbitrary and incongruous. On the very face of it, the scheme is about as arbitrary as could well be conceived, for no one would have the faintest idea *à priori* that the several parts of the Old Testament ritual system were intended to convey the meaning that is here put upon them. Nor is the present view of the meaning of the ritual system more arbitrary and incongruous in itself, than it is utterly inconsistent with the author's fundamental quotation. So far is it from being the case that the earthly tabernacle in all its parts is a copy of things in the heavens, that from all that appears no part of the earthly tabernacle is here regarded as in strictness of language a copy of anything; for though the holy place (not, be it observed, the whole tabernacle) is still conceived to represent heaven, it does not appear to have been copied from it, but rather the whole tabernacle, including the ceremonies associated with each of the two divisions, was an original creation of the Holy Ghost, intended to teach by means of symbol or parable that

the present world, and especially the ritual system belonging to it, was shadowy and evanescent, and that heaven was still unopened and inaccessible. Anyhow, it is certain that the first tabernacle, with its ceremonies, is "a parable for the present time," which seems to imply that it cannot possibly be a copy of things in the heavens; it is also certain that the author himself makes hardly any pretence of establishing a parallel between the high priestly action connected with even the second tabernacle and the spiritual realities of the heavenly world. Let us glance at a few particulars.

The author starts from the fact that the priests entered constantly into the first tabernacle doing worship or service, that is to say, they were continual worshippers (λατρεύοντες, cf. xii. 28), though only of an indirect, distant, secondary character, not being admitted into the immediate presence of God. The high priest, on the other hand, was a direct, immediate worshipper; he was admitted into the very presence of God; but then he was not a constant, not even a daily worshipper; he entered the presence of God only for a moment once in the year; and besides, he was but a single isolated individual in what should have been a whole nation of worshippers. Thus, on the one hand, the first tabernacle with its constant, but indirect, distant, secondary services, bears a certain resemblance to the present earthly world state, with its carnal ordinances, where men worship indeed, and worship constantly, but only in an imperfect, outward, unspiritual manner; on the other hand, the second tabernacle, with its direct and immediate, but for the mass of the people, and even of the priests, inaccessible service resembles the future heavenly world state, *as viewed from the present*, where men shall enjoy the most intimate fellowship with God, and worship Him face to face. In other words, the first tabernacle, with its services, affords a picture or parable of earth *while it is still present*; the second tabernacle, with its services, affords a picture or parable of heaven *while it is still future*. This implies that when the earthly world state has become past, and the heavenly world state present, the second tabernacle with its services will no more afford a suitable parable of heaven and the worship connected therewith; for when the

heavenly world state has become present, heaven will be thrown open; the veil will be torn away; the first tabernacle will be taken down; and instead of the high priest entering alone for a moment once in the year, the High Priest shall enter as the forerunner of the whole people, and both He and they shall worship continually in the immediate presence of God. So substantially we find it in x. 19, *seq.*, where it is said, "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holy place, in the blood of Jesus, by the way which He inaugurated for us, a new and living way, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh, and having a great Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in fulness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our body washed with pure water." In this way heaven, though it still resembles the second tabernacle as being the place of God's immediate presence, yet, in respect of the persons and ceremonies connected with it, it rather resembles the first tabernacle. In brief, therefore, the first tabernacle, with its ministers and services, furnishes relatively to the second a symbolic picture of the present earthly state of existence—especially of the whole earthly tabernacle, with its earthly offerings, and its imperfect fleshly worshippers; the second tabernacle, with its one minister and its one annual service, furnishes relatively to the first a symbolic picture of heaven, while still unentered either by Christ or believers; neither the second tabernacle, nor the first, with their respective services, is even alleged to furnish a symbolic picture of heaven after it has become the worshipping place of Christ and believers.

It must be admitted that we have now a singularly intricate combination of figures; we have figures within figures, and types typifying types; we have even parts of types typifying the whole types of which they are parts, in addition to a mass of other materials. Nor is it at all evident why the symbolic materials should be interpreted as they are in preference to other ways that might easily be suggested. For example, if the mere fact that the whole of the priests did not enter continually into the second tabernacle accomplishing services be an indication that "the way into the holy place hath not yet



been manifested," why should not the fact that the people did not enter at all into the *first* tabernacle accomplishing services be an indication that the way into the tabernacle as a whole hath not yet been manifested? And, in that case, why should not the whole tabernacle be regarded as equally earthly and equally antitypical of heaven, as all standing or falling together, in accordance with the writer's original idea, to which he reverts in v. 11? Again, if the fact that the ordinary priests did not enter the second tabernacle daily, as they entered the first, be an indication that heaven was not yet opened, why should not the fact that the high priest did enter the second tabernacle yearly, and entered too as the representative of the whole people, be an indication that heaven was already opened? And, in that case, why should not the entrance of the high priest be taken to symbolise that of Christ, entering as the forerunner of His people, who should follow by the same "way," without any rending of the veil, or taking down of the first tabernacle? This surely would fall in much better with the parallel which the author is bent on establishing between the functions of Christ and those of the Aaronic high priest; and, indeed, in spite of what is here said, the author appears to adopt this very view of the symbolism in several parts of the present chapter.

Possibly it may be thought that there is no real antagonism between the idea that the first tabernacle is a parable for the present time after the fashion of which (*καθ' ἣν*) the earthly ritual is practised, and the other idea that the whole tabernacle is an antitype of heaven, that all things in the earthly tabernacle were made after the fashion of the type (*κατὰ τὸν τύπον*) shown to Moses in the mount; for it may be thought that a *parable* (*παραβολή*) and an *antitype* (*ἀντίτυπος*) are two different things, and that the first tabernacle may be part of an antitype of a whole heavenly tabernacle, and at the same time a parable showing forth the nature of the whole earthly ritual system. But if such a notion were entertained, it would have no other effect than to bring back upon us in its full force the question we are now seeking to answer, What is there of a heavenly nature corresponding to the inner and outer divisions of the earthly tabernacle with their respective

ministers and services? The notion, however, is manifestly quite groundless. For when the first tabernacle is regarded as a parable for the present time, the second tabernacle is identified with heaven in a manner that leaves no room for a heavenly first tabernacle. The word parable is not applied to the second tabernacle as representing heaven, but only the word "antitype" (ix. 24); more commonly heaven is simply spoken of under the name of the "holy place" (v. 8) just as it would be if the relation between the two were described by the words *copy* (ὑπόδειγμα), or *shadow* (σκιὰ), or *antitype* (ἀντίτυπος); and so completely does the second tabernacle represent the whole of heaven without the first, that the opening up of heaven, and the opening up of the second tabernacle by the entire removal of the first, are spoken of in the same terms (v. 8). Such a mode of representation would be impossible, if the first tabernacle, including the veil, were still regarded as antitypical of heavenly things, for the removal of the latter would imply the removal of "things which cannot be moved" (xii. 28). It follows that, according to the paragraph before us, the first tabernacle, with its ministers and services, represents — was framed to represent — the earthly ritual system, or rather the whole earthly sphere of existence, including especially the ritual system, and nothing else; that the second tabernacle represents heaven, the whole of heaven, and that only; that the first tabernacle is related to the second as earth to heaven; and that the author's original view, according to which the first tabernacle, equally with the second, was copied from things in the heavens, has been completely disrupted and departed from.

But this is not all. The main reason why the author sought to identify the tabernacle, or any part of it, with heaven was that he might make out a parallel between the ministry of Jesus and that of the Aaronic high priest. Now, on the present system, the second tabernacle is indeed identified with heaven; but the high priest's ministry is so far from being identified with the ministry of Jesus that the two are implicitly contrasted, and the former is interpreted as indicating symbolically what the latter will not be rather than what it will be. Even the bare tabernacle, apart from its

ministry, does not properly represent heaven until the veil has been torn away, the latter being identified with an earthly thing, and having nothing corresponding to it in heaven. The high priest entered alone within the veil; he entered as the representative of the whole people; and this element of representation is commonly held to be of the very essence of priesthood properly so called: but before Jesus could enter, the veil had to be removed, and then the way was open not for Jesus only, but for the whole body of believers, who enter each on his own account, and worship without the intervention of a representative. And the permanent entrance and service of all believers (Jesus included) bears no resemblance whatever to the momentary entrance and service of the high priest alone once in the year. In fact, our author himself, as already stated, implicitly contrasts the two things, and regards the high priest's entrance in no other light than as a proof that "the way into the holy place hath not yet been manifested"—as a proof, therefore, that an entrance parallel to that of Jesus and believers into heaven could not as yet take place. When Jesus entered, he did not enter by the high priest's way, nor on the high priest's mission, but "by a new . . . way which he inaugurated FOR US through the veil" (x. 20), and on a new mission, "to appear before the face of God [as an Intercessor] on our behalf" (ix. 24). Thus, if the author's attempt to account for the first tabernacle and its ministry by making it a parabolic representation of the present world-period, with its fleshly ritual system, be opposed to the proper antitypical character of the first tabernacle and its ministry, his identification of the second tabernacle and its ministry with heaven, *while still unopened*, is also and almost equally opposed to the proper antitypical character of the high priest's ministry in the second tabernacle. And if the ministry of the high priest be not properly antitypical, the high priest himself cannot be a proper antitype of Christ, that is, Christ cannot be a priest, nor His work a sacrifice, as the author would fain prove them to be. And so the present interpretation of the ritual system, if it begins by directly contradicting the author's fundamental quotation, so it ends by completely refuting his main contention; it is, therefore, from his standpoint, absolutely suicidal.

How far the functions of Christ are from being priestly, and His death from being a sacrifice in any proper sense, when His flesh is identified with the veil, and the holy place is regarded as a parabolic representation of heaven unopened, may be very easily shown. The victim in this case cannot be the body of Christ, since that is already appropriated to represent the veil, and since it were highly absurd to represent veil and victim as absolutely identical. The thing offered must therefore be Christ Himself in His inner Divine nature (ix. 14), who must at the same time do duty as priest. Thus priest and victim must be here absolutely identical and interchangeable, and both must be united in the most intimate manner to the veil, so as almost to form part of it! Altar there can be none, unless we regard the veil as at the same time supplying the place of an altar. The rending of the veil and the offering of the victim must take place in the same moment, and must together constitute but a single act, which, however, is not performed by the priest, who is perfectly *passive* in the whole transaction. Add to this that the Priest-victim is an invisible, impalpable eternal Spirit, incapable of death in the ordinary sense, and then say if anything can be conceived more utterly different from an ordinary sacrifice than such a performance. There is really nothing in the entire proceeding having the least resemblance to any one of the elements entering into an Old Testament sacrifice. Blood is indeed spoken of (x. 19), but this only shows that the whole affair is a mass of incongruities, for the blood must proceed from the veil and not from the victim! The only trait common to an Old Testament victim and the spiritual nature of Christ is that the latter is morally spotless (*ἄμωμον*, ix. 14) as the former was physically spotless; in all other respects the two are totally different. And that the entrance through the rent veil subsequent to the offering has scarcely anything in common with the annual entrance of the high priest into the holy place has been already pointed out.

I need not insist on the general incongruity of making one half of the earthly tabernacle, with its ministry and its offerings, represent earth and earthly things, notably the things connected with itself, while the other half, equally earthly in



itself, is made to represent heaven and heavenly things; nor upon the absurdity of identifying the flesh of Christ, a purely *earthly* thing, with the veil skirting the margin of a *heavenly* tabernacle. Such freaks of interpretation are of interest only in this regard—that they serve to evince the boundless caprice of the author's fancy, and that of the age in which he lived.

But it is unnecessary, and possibly it may be considered unfair, to dwell too minutely on the present typico-parabolic interpretation of the two main divisions of the Mosaic tabernacle, for, as already hinted, our author himself has so little confidence in it that he hastens to depart from it almost as soon as it has been propounded. No doubt he returns to the same, or a similar view, in chap. x. 18, *seq.*, but the view itself is so little in harmony with the fundamental parallel which the author wishes to establish that it is no wonder if he neither adheres to it consistently nor pushes it into detail. In the long section, ix. 11-28, it falls almost entirely out of sight, and instead, we find that the author brings together materials culled from several independent ritual ceremonies, so as to form a picture of the work of Christ much more nearly approaching to a complete parallel than could be derived from any single ritual observance. But we must quote his exact words :—

“But Christ having come an High Priest of the good things to come, through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this [earthly] creation, nor yet through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, entered in once for all into the [heavenly] holy place, [after] having obtained eternal redemption [=accomplished through death “the redemption (or remission x. 18, or purification, i. 3) of the transgressions under the first covenant” (ix. 15); “put away sin” (v. 26); “borne away the sins of many” (v. 28); “perfected for ever the sanctified” (x. 14)]. For [to give the *rationale* of eternal redemption, understood in the sense now indicated, on ritualistic principles—showing *how* it was “obtained”] if the blood of goats and bulls, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling them that have been defiled, sanctify unto the purity of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit,

offered Himself [=died "unto the redemption of the transgressions" (v. 15)] without blemish unto God, purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God. And for this cause [=since eternal redemption of the whole body of believers from sin was so obtained] He is the Mediator of a new covenant, in order that, a death having taken place unto [=so as to "obtain"] the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, they that have been called [= "the people" whose transgressions have been redeemed and done away, who have been sanctified, purified, and made perfect for ever, by the death that took place] might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance" (vv. 11-15).

The first thing that strikes us in these verses is that the author, discarding entirely the notion that the earthly first tabernacle represents the earthly world generally, including, especially, the flesh of Christ and the Mosaic ritual system, returns to his former idea that the whole earthly tabernacle is a secondary shadowy representation copied from a heavenly original. There is such a thing as "the [afore-mentioned] greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation," as well as "the [corresponding] holy place," not made with hands, that is to say, not "an antitype of the [afore-mentioned] true" holy place (v. 24). Both the divisions of the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry (v. 21), are now again regarded as "the [afore-mentioned] copies of the [afore-mentioned] things in the heavens" (v. 23), "the heavenly things" (viii. 5), "the good things to come" (ix 11), "the heavenly things themselves" (v. 23). At the same time, the author makes no reference to any officers or actions connected with the heavenly first tabernacle: though the building with its furniture is there, it serves no conceivable purpose, but for the high priest to pass through on his way to the holy place. The reason, of course, is that the author, having nothing of a spiritual kind which he can read *into* the officers and actions connected with the first tabernacle, has, likewise, nothing which he can read *out of* them. The ordinary priests and daily offerings are not said to typify anything, simply because there is nothing for them to typify; and this indicates that the problem raised, and attempted to be

solved in the previous section, is ultimately given up as insoluble. Some, indeed, have supposed the author's notion to be that the two heavenly tabernacles are joined into one by the removal of the veil, and that this accounts for the absence of any priestly action but that of the high priest in the second tabernacle. But when the veil is spoken of as removable (x. 20), it is identified, not with something heavenly, but with something earthly—viz., the flesh of Christ, and its removal forms part of the removal of the whole first tabernacle, that is, of the earthly world generally (ix. 8-10 ; xii. 27). Was there a veil originally between the two heavenly tabernacles, or was there not? If there was not, why should *two* tabernacles be distinguished at all, or mention be made of a "holy place" in the ideal heavenly "tabernacle"? How could *all things* in the earthly tabernacle have been made after a heavenly pattern? and how could the believer's hope be said to enter "into that which is within the veil"? If there was, how could it possibly be removed seeing that heavenly things are such as "cannot be moved."

Again, the holy place with the high priest's action is not now regarded as a picture of heaven *while still unopened*, but as formerly the high priest's entrance within the veil into the earthly holy place is taken to represent the entrance of Christ within the veil into the heavenly holy place, the veil being thought of as still standing after the entrance (vi. 20). And instead of the *infrequent* and isolated entrance of the high priest being put forward as an indication that heaven was still unopened, his *frequent* entrance is put forward as an indication that the sacrifice he offered was ineffectual (ix. 25). The high priest entered often, because his sacrifice could not put away sins, nor sanctify the people; Christ entered once, and only once, because His sacrifice accomplished all that needed to be accomplished, put away sins and sanctified the people.

Still, though the writer endeavours to make out a general parallel between the action of the Jewish high priest in symbolically sanctifying the whole people of Israel and the action of Jesus in truly sanctifying the whole body of believers, he does not even allege that the parallel holds with anything

like exactness. The fact that the one entered often, while the other entered but once, is only one among many acknowledged points of difference. The high priest entered within the veil as the representative of a whole people, and therefore alone; Jesus entered within the veil as the leader or fore-runner of a whole people (vi. 19, 20), and therefore together with them. The high priest entered only for a moment, returning after he had performed certain specific actions; Jesus together with the whole body of believers enters to abide for ever. These differences give rise to others that change the entire form of the action attributed to Jesus, so that it bears very little resemblance to the action of the Jewish high priest. On the day of atonement, the high priest, after slaying the people's goat, carried the blood within the veil, and sprinkled it on the mercy-seat; and in the act of so doing he made atonement on behalf of the whole people; that is, in the view of our author, he made an abortive attempt at the entire removal of sin from their whole nature. There were, it is true, other ceremonies, such as the sending away of the scapegoat, to which our author makes no allusion, because he has nothing at all corresponding to them. But there was no such thing as the sprinkling of blood or anything else on the people; nor yet on the priest, whose atonement for personal sin was carried out separately, by sprinkling the blood of a separate victim on the mercy-seat; which is what is referred to in the statement that the high priest was bound "to offer up sacrifices *first for his own sins* and then for the people's" (vii. 27; cf. v. 3). Moreover, in the case of a Jewish sacrifice, the sprinkling of the blood on the mercy-seat was the very act and point of offering, and there was no such thing as an offering of the victim independent of this, for the mere slaughter of the victim is nowhere spoken of as the offering, any more than is the burning of its carcass without the camp. The act of offering always effected the atonement (Lev. xvi. 24); but the slaughter of the victim had no effect whatever; that which effected the atonement was the sprinkling of the blood—which was, therefore, the act of offering (Lev. xvi. 15, 16). In the case of Jesus, on the other hand, the so-called high priestly action is altogether different. I do not mean merely that the



literal action of Jesus as Saviour of men differs in its essential nature from the action of the Jewish high priest—that it does of course—but that the figurative action which our author attributes to Jesus differs entirely, even in its outward form, from the high priest's action on the day of atonement. No doubt the eternal redemption carried out by Christ, the leader of salvation, on the whole body of believers is represented as effected through His offering a sacrifice (ix. 26), just as the abortive redemption, in the parallel case of the whole people of Israel, was effected through the high priest's offering a sacrifice. But the fact that all the people, and not the high priest alone, have here to enter the holy place, leads our author to represent all alike as entering through blood; and as there were occasions when the people were purified from ceremonial defilement by sprinkling blood upon them (vv. 13, 19), while there was no ritual precedent for representing the people as carrying in blood and sprinkling it on the mercy-seat, the author modifies the atonement ceremony so far as to make the shedding of His blood by Jesus, and the sprinkling of it on the people, the medium of sanctifying Him and them respectively, and so dispenses entirely with the sprinkling of blood on a heavenly mercy-seat. This further permits of the point of offering being identified with the point of death, and thereby avoids the extreme incongruity of representing the physical blood of Jesus as being carried into *heaven*, while on the other hand, by retaining the offering of Jesus in the region of earthly things, some sort of parallelism is preserved between it and the earthly offering of a Jewish high priest. Thus it comes to pass that there is no idea, and no mention of offering the blood of Jesus at all—at least there is no idea of carrying it within the veil and offering it on a heavenly mercy-seat. Christ enters “through [shedding] His own blood” (v. 12); the people of Christ enter “in [=sprinkled with (v. 14; x. 22)] the blood of Jesus” (x. 19); but in neither case is the blood offered. On the contrary, the offering always coincides with the death of Christ, which is the means of putting away sin (ix. 26), or obtaining redemption (vv. 12, 15), and which took place before the entrance into the holy place. Christ obtained redemption in the putting off of the body of

His flesh through death (Col. i. 22), just as every believer obtains redemption by dying after His example (Rom. vi. 6 ; viii. 23) ; and He entered into the holy place as our forerunner *after* having so obtained it (*εὐπάμενος*, v. 12). It is distinctly stated that Christ offered up, not His blood, nor even His body, but “Himself,” in and through His “eternal Spirit,”—the glorious, “spotless,” Divine nature, which forms so utter a contrast to the ignoble and corruptible nature of goats and bulls—and that this offering of Himself was the condition on which, and the means through which, His blood became available for sprinkling the consciences of believers (v. 14). Still, though the thing offered be the “Spirit,” and not either the body or the blood of Jesus, the offering is not to be understood as taking place subsequent to the entrance. The point of offering is once and again identified with the point of death: “As it is appointed unto men once to *die*, . . . so also Christ was once *offered*” (vv. 27, 28) : “Nor yet that He should *offer* Himself often, . . . for then must He often have *suffered*” (vv. 25, 26, *cf.* Paul’s “I am now being offered,” 2 Tim. iv. 6). Christ can be spoken of alternatively as offering Himself (v. 25), or as being offered (v. 28), and the latter expression, which points to His *passive* (*παθεῖν*, v. 25) or violent death at the hands of men, is of itself sufficient to prove that the death and the act of offering are identical.

Naturally enough, therefore, the offering of Christ is represented either as the means of effecting the purification of sins directly (v. 28), or of providing the blood by which purification is effected through sprinkling on the conscience (v. 14), a mode of representation that would be impossible, if purification were effected through sprinkling the blood on the mercy-seat. Not that the offering of himself and the sprinkling of the people are thought of as dissociated, as if a man might be sprinkled with the blood of Jesus at any time, and so enter the holy place. The offering and the sprinkling are regarded as parts of a single ceremony, and they constitute together the act of “obtaining eternal redemption,” to wit, “the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant.” “Jesus, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood suffered [= offered Himself] without the gate”

(xiii. 12); and the suffering or shedding and sprinkling are thought of as occurring together. The idea that the blood is kept up, and sprinkled on the people individually, separately, and subsequently, is out of the question when the writer is drawing a parallel between the action of Jesus and that of the Aaronic high priest. When it is said that Jesus entered into the holy place "through His own blood" (ix. 12), this must mean through shedding His blood; when it is said that he sanctified the people "through His own blood" (xiii. 12), this must mean through sprinkling His blood upon them; and both these acts are so closely associated with the act of offering Himself, that the effects of both can be connected immediately either with His death (ix. 15), or with his offering (vv. 26, 28). If when it is said that Jesus entered into the holy place "through His own blood," the meaning were that He entered carrying His blood to sprinkle it upon the mercy-seat, this would imply that His own redemption from sin took place not before but subsequent to His entering, and that the redemption of the people took place in the same individual act with His own. And this would still be a very imperfect parallel to the action of the Jewish high priest; for the high priest's own redemption from sin was accomplished by a separate act of offering on his own behalf, so that when he entered with the blood of the people's goat he entered already sanctified. He did not therefore enter *through* the blood of the people's goat in any sense, but simply *with* it. Apart from this, however, there would be no need for sprinkling the blood on the people at all (v. 14; x. 22), if their redemption were accomplished in the act of sprinkling the blood on the mercy-seat. If men, as the writer asserts, are completely sanctified by the sprinkling of blood upon them, what in addition to this could the sprinkling of the blood on the mercy-seat do for them? And besides, how comes it that there is nowhere the slightest reference to the sprinkling of the blood of Christ on a heavenly mercy-seat, when there is so frequent mention of sprinkling it on the hearts or consciences of the people? The literal impossibility of the thing is not appreciably greater in the former case than in the latter. Yet the blood is nowhere said to be offered. The thing

offered is, on the contrary, always sharply distinguished from the blood, particularly in this very passage (v. 14). The act of offering is identified with the act of death (vv. 15, 25, 28), while it is clearly separated from the entrance, as a thing that takes place independently (vv. 25, 26), the entrance being made, not to offer, but after the offering, and for an entirely different purpose (v. 24). There is no doubt, therefore, that when Jesus is said to enter "through His own blood," this means through shedding His own blood, that when the people are said to enter "in the blood of Jesus," this means sprinkled with the blood of Jesus, that the offering is identified with the death of Jesus, having been enacted during His "manifestation" (v. 26), that the shedding and sprinkling are so closely associated with the act of offering as to form parts of the same ceremony, the effect of the latter being identical with the joint effect of the two former, while yet neither the shedding nor sprinkling is properly speaking the act of offering, and, finally, that the eternal redemption, the perfected sanctification, alike of Jesus and of all the people, is represented as taking place *before* either He or they enter into the holy place.

Still, it is not to be denied that the author does vacillate in his mode of representation. And no wonder. For the ceremony of sprinkling the people, being no part of the ceremony of offering on the day of atonement, tends to assume an independent position, and appear in Christ's case also as a thing distinct from the offering, in spite of the fact that the offering of Christ to resemble that of the Jewish high priest, must be the sole means of sanctifying the people as a body (x. 14). And it is easy to see that this separation of the act of sprinkling from the act of offering, though it introduces great vacillation, inconsistency, and incoherency into the writer's figurative representations—completely destroying, as it does, any parallelism that is still left between the so-called offering of Christ and the offering of the Jewish high priest on the day of atonement—is yet a step in the direction of representing the work of Christ after a literal or matter-of-fact fashion. For, in actual experience, the sanctification of believers is quite separate and distinct from the offering—



which is identified with the death—of Jesus. Accordingly, we find that when the sanctification of believers is represented as effected by the sprinkling of Christ's blood, instead of by the offering of Himself, there is usually a mixing up more or less of literal with figurative representations, which is very interesting to observe.

Take, for example, the passage x. 18, *seq.*, "Having therefore, brethren, boldness *for the entering of the holy place in the blood of Jesus*, . . . let us draw near with a true heart, in fulness of faith, having our hearts *sprinkled* from an evil conscience"—where the distinctly figurative language is put in italics. So, in the section now under consideration, when the writer says, "For if the blood of goats and bulls . . . sanctify unto the purity of the flesh, how much more *shall* the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, *offered* Himself without blemish unto God, *purify* your conscience from dead works to serve the living God" (vv. 13, 14)—the use of the future "shall purify," in contrast to the past "offered," indicates that the sprinkling is viewed as taking place separately from the offering, and hence, instead of referring to the persons affected figuratively as "the people," the writer refers to them literally in the words "your [=believers'] conscience." Again, the following exhibits a mixture of literal and figurative language: "Therefore, while ( $\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu$ ) it was necessary that the copies of the things in the heavens should be purified with these [sacrifices, it was necessary ( $\delta\epsilon$ )] that the heavenly things themselves [should be purified] with better sacrifices than these [not with these sacrifices—] for Christ entered not into a holy place made with hands, the antitype of the true [holy place], but into *heaven itself*, *now to appear before the face of God* [to make intercession (vii. 25)] *on our behalf*:—nor [( $\circ\upsilon$ )] was it necessary ( $\delta\epsilon$ )] that He should offer Himself often," &c. (ix. 23-25; cf. vii. 27). Here Christ's offering of Himself constitutes a separate item ( $\circ\upsilon\delta\acute{\epsilon}$ , v. 25) from the sprinkling of "the heavenly things themselves" (v. 23), including "the people" (v. 19), by which purification is immediately effected. And in combination with this, instead of saying "but [Christ entered] into the true holy place," the writer winds up literally, "but

[Christ entered] into heaven itself, now to appear before the face of God on our behalf.”\*

Once more, there is a striking mixture of literal and figurative language in the closing verse of the present chapter, where we read that “Christ, having been once offered to bear away the sins of many, *shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait* (ἀπεκδεχόμενοι) *for Him unto salvation.*” Usually when the work of Christ is represented under the form of a sacrifice, whereby the sins of the people are done away, the eternal redemption of the whole body of believers is represented as having been “perfected for ever” in the act of Christ’s death, while Christ Himself is represented as having sat down *for ever* at God’s right hand, from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made the footstool of His feet (i. 3 ; x. 12, 13). With respect to Christ in particular, the common representation is that He “entered *once for all* into the holy place” (vi. 20 ; ix. 12, 24), that He became, on sitting down at God’s right hand, “a high priest *for ever*” (v. 9, 10 ; vi. 20 ; vii. 26 ; viii. 1), a point of view which, as the language employed shows, has been determined by Ps. cx. Yet in the verse just quoted Christ is represented as appearing or being manifested a second time in much the same way as He was manifested the first time (v. 26), and this too for the purpose of carrying out to “perfection” the salvation of His people. That this latter mode of representation is literal, and the other figurative, is sufficiently evident. In fact, we have here just the ordinary\* New Testament language respecting the second coming, as the following quotations will show : “For our citizenship is in heaven, from

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\* Of course it need not be observed that there is no spiritual or heavenly reality answering to the purification through blood-sprinkling of the earthly “tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry, and almost all things” connected therewith, for the sufficient reason that there is nothing in the heavenly world having the faintest shadow of resemblance to all or to any of these things. The hearts of believers are purified by faith (Acts xv. 9 ; 1 Pet. i. 19, 22), and this answers to the purifying of “all the people” (Heb. ix. 19 ; x. 22) by blood-sprinkling, but there are no other heavenly things themselves to purify. The statements of the commentators on this matter may be taken as a fair enough sample of the depth of absurdity to which exegesis, especially Continental exegesis, is capable of descending.

whence also we wait (*ἀπεκδεχόμεθα*) for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall transform the body of our humiliation, &c. (Phil. iii. 20). “Waiting (*ἀπεκδεχομένους*) for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall also confirm you unto the end” (1 Cor. i. 7, 8). “Waiting (*ἀπεκδεχόμενοι*) for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body” (Rom. viii. 23). “We through the Spirit by faith wait (*ἀπεκδεχόμεθα*) for the hope of righteousness” (Gal. v. 5). “Waiting (*προσδεχόμενοι*) for the blessed hope, and appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to Himself a peculiar people zealous of good works” (Tit. ii. 13, 14; *cf.* “obtain eternal redemption,” and “purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God,” of our passage). From these passages it is manifest not only that Christ did not enter *once for all* into the holy place, did not sit down *for ever* at God’s right hand, but also that He did not enter “having obtained eternal redemption,” having “purified His people’s conscience from dead works to serve the living God,” and did not sit down “having made purification of sins,” or having “perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” When these things are said to have been done, the process by which the whole body of believers, from the foundation of the world to its consummation, are really sanctified through the operation of the Spirit of God, is presented under the form, and in the phraseology, of the action by which the whole congregation of Israel were abortively sanctified through the sprinkling of a goat’s blood on the mercy-seat, with the result that the whole work of salvation, from beginning to end, both as accomplished on the person of Christ Himself, and as accomplished on the persons of all believers, is practically identified with the death of Christ. Even the forty days that elapsed before the ascension would suffice completely to overthrow the literal view of the writer’s language, for there is no doubt that the entrance into the holy place is represented as taking place in immediate connection with the offering, which again is identified with the death of Jesus. If Jesus literally entered heaven and sat down for ever at God’s right hand the moment after His death, the Gospel story must be either pure fable or

else pure figure; and, conversely, if the Gospel story be literal historical fact, the language of the present writer must be figurative—which indeed it evidently is. As a matter of literal fact, the entrance into heaven on the part of Jesus was a lifelong spiritual process, just as it is in the case of each believer (x. 19, *seq.*). So far as the person of Jesus Himself was concerned, the final step in the process of redemption took place at the resurrection when His body was spiritualised and glorified; but so far as the persons of believers are concerned, the final step in the process of redemption will take place only at the second coming—the absolute “consummation of the ages”—when sin with all its consequences shall be finally done away, and the eternal inheritance shall be received.

It has been said that the writer modifies the day of atonement ceremony so as to represent high priest and people as alike entering the holy place in or through blood, and that this is done by combining together two ceremonies that are quite distinct. The union of the two different ceremonies is seen in the words, “If the blood of goats and bulls, and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling them that have been defiled, sanctify unto the purity of the flesh,” &c. (v.13).\* “The blood of goats and bulls” belongs to the day of atonement ceremony; “the ashes of an heifer” belong to another distinct ceremony (Num. xix.), in which “those that had been defiled,” were actually “sprinkled” for purification. The one ceremony furnishes the idea that blood effects purification, the other

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\* It may be well to note that the writer speaks somewhat loosely when he says that “the blood of goats, &c. . . . sanctifieth unto the purity of the flesh.” Such language is strictly true only of the “divers washings” (v. 10, *cf.* “bodies washed with pure water,” x. 22), of which the writer has just been speaking, and which are doubtless still running in his mind. The divers washings with water (Num. xix., &c.) actually produced a purifying effect on the flesh, and the effect of these is, for the time being, taken as the typical (using that word in its modern sense) effect of a Levitical action. To our way of thinking, at any rate, the application of blood and ashes would defile rather than purify the flesh; but what the writer means is that the effect of that and all similar actions (such as washing) was a merely fleshly effect; it touched or influenced the flesh only, and did not reach to the heart or conscience; while the action was directed to purification, it affected the flesh, nothing more, so that loosely speaking it might be said to purify the flesh.



the idea that sprinkling the defiled effects purification, and from the two ceremonies combined—leaving out incompatible details—the writer obtains the general doctrine that sprinkling the defiled with blood is the means of purification. And since defilement is the sole hindrance to entering the holy place and serving the living God, since purification is the sole condition of entrance and of worship, it follows that sprinkling the defiled with blood may be represented as the condition of entrance into the holy place. But if the people are purified, and enter the holy place through the sprinkling of blood upon them, there is no longer any room or need for the sprinkling of blood on the mercy-seat; unless, indeed, this latter should be regarded as the means of purifying the high priest himself. Since, however, the entrance of the high priest is regarded as entirely parallel to that of each one of the people, he entering as forerunner and they as afterrunners, it is much more natural to think of him also as doing so through being sprinkled with blood. Accordingly, the heavenly high priest is represented as entering the holy place “through [shedding = being sprinkled with] his own blood” (v. 12). Not only so, but the same form of representation appears to be transferred to the earthly high priest, when he is said to enter into the holy place “through the blood of goats and bulls” (v. 12), or, “in blood not his own” (v. 25), both these expressions being manifestly identical in meaning, and the former being used in a sense corresponding to “through his own blood” (v. 12), as the latter is used in a sense corresponding to “in the blood of Jesus” (19). When Jesus entered heaven, He did so already purified “through [having shed = been sprinkled with] His own blood;” when the high priest entered the holy place to purify the people, he did so already purified indeed, but not either “through [= sprinkled with] the blood of goats and bulls,” or “in [= sprinkled with] blood not his own:” still, as sprinkling with blood was a recognised means of purification, the high priest might be represented, though unhistorically, as entering “through [= sprinkled with] the blood of goats and bulls,” or “in [= sprinkled with] blood not his own,” in like manner as Jesus entered “through [= sprinkled with] His own blood,” and as believers enter “in [= sprinkled with] the blood of Jesus.”

Of course when the form of the ceremony is so modified, and the precise method of purification so understood, the so-called offering of Christ loses much of its importance; at least the point of offering in the case of Christ no longer corresponds to the point of offering in the case of the Jewish high priest; for in the high priest's case the point of offering was the very point of purification, whereas in the case of Christ, the offering merely provides the blood by which purification is effected in a separate act of sprinkling.

Such, then, is the manner in which the ceremony on the day of atonement appears to be modified in order to bring it into closer accordance with the spiritual facts. Now, it is evident that the atonement ceremony, as thus modified, bears a decided resemblance to the ceremony which took place at the inauguration of the Sinaitic Covenant. It is not strange, therefore, that our author should pass almost insensibly from the one to the other, "And for this cause [= such being the method of atonement as effected by Christ on believers] He is the Mediator of a new covenant, in order that, a death having taken place for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, they that have been called (iii. 1, *seq.*) might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. . . . Wherefore, not even the first covenant [much less the second] hath been inaugurated without blood; for when every commandment had been spoken by Moses unto all the people according to the law, he took the blood of the calves and the goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the covenant which God commanded to you-ward" (vv. 15-20). These verses must be taken in connection with what is said elsewhere in the epistle respecting the new covenant and the inheritance attached to it (*e.g.*, chaps. iii., iv.; viii. 6-13; xii. 18-29). In a previous connection we noticed that the parallel between law and Gospel is the most fundamental in the whole epistle. The hortatory portions of the epistle are based on the *à fortiori* argument that if those who set at nought the law were visited with severe penalties, those who set at nought the Gospel will be visited with penalties severer still; while the doctrinal portions

are subsidiary to the hortatory. It is this parallel between law and Gospel that meets us in the above passages under the aspect and nomenclature of the first and second covenants.

With respect to the Sinaitic covenant and the ceremony by which it was inaugurated, one general remark may be made—viz., that if it afford a picture of the plan of salvation at all, that picture must be complete in itself. If the death of Christ corresponds to the sacrifice by which the covenant was inaugurated, and if that death have the effect of sanctifying once and for ever the whole body of the people, and if the promised inheritance, the enjoyment of which constitutes the end of the covenant, belong to the sanctified people, then the scheme is complete, there is no room for any other ceremonies. If the work of Christ, as Mediator of the Gospel, be represented by the works of Moses as mediator of the law, it cannot at the same time be represented by the work of the Aaronic high priest on the day of atonement. If heaven correspond to the land of Canaan, which the whole people are supposed to enter as soon as the covenant is made, it cannot at the same time correspond to the holy place, nor to the whole tabernacle, nor to anything but the land of Canaan. And so, by much the greatest part of the ritual law is left entirely out in the cold, there being nothing whatever to answer to it under the Gospel. Theologians often speak as if the work of Christ corresponded at once to that of the high priest on the day of atonement, and to that of Moses, as mediator of the covenant; but it is only fragments of these two functions that will hang together. Our author indeed, besides recasting entirely the form of the atonement ceremony, weaves in traits from other ceremonies into that by which the covenant was inaugurated: the “water and scarlet wool and hyssop” is taken from the ceremony alluded to in v. 13, in which the ashes of an heifer were sprinkled on persons defiled by a dead body; while the blood of “goats,” in addition to “oxen” or “calves,” is probably from the atonement ceremony; as is also the sprinkling of “the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry” (v. 21). But this modifying and mixing up of different ceremonies only shows how great freedom the author uses with Old Testament materials, and how far *any* of the

Old Testament rites and ceremonies, and persons and places, are from affording an exact picture of New Testament things and persons.

The writer speaks of Jesus as Mediator of a new covenant, and compares him to Moses the mediator of the old or Sinaitic covenant. Let us see in what sense the Gospel can be regarded as a covenant, of which Jesus is the Mediator, and how far it resembles the covenant made at Sinai.

The English word *covenant* (like the Hebrew word בְּרִית, and its equivalent the Greek word διαθήκη) means an agreement or *bargain* between two parties, whereby each party comes under obligation to perform certain conditions towards the attainment of a common end. Now, the covenant made between God and Israel at Sinai was precisely such an agreement. On the one hand, the people came under obligation to obey all the words of the law which Jehovah had spoken; on the other hand, Jehovah came under obligation to bestow on the people the land of Canaan along with His favour, fellowship, and protection. In the view of our author, the end aimed at in the giving of the law was the same as the end aimed at in the giving of the Gospel, a people was to be brought into perfect fellowship of life with God; and this end was to be attained by the people fulfilling their condition of perfect obedience, while God fulfilled His condition of conferring the life. The law was enacted upon promises (viii. 6); there was attached to it the promise of an eternal inheritance (ix. 15), which those who obeyed it should receive; and the aim of the inaugural ceremony is conceived to have been to sanctify or purify the people, so that they might at once enter on the possession of the inheritance. This was the covenant which the Lord made with the children of Israel in the day that he took them by the hand to lead them forth out of the land of Egypt (viii. 9).

On the other hand, according to our author's statement, the new covenant has been made when the law has been written on the people's hearts (viii. 10), a thing which God Himself has promised to do; that is to say, the covenant state is simply the state of renewal, and the process of making the covenant must therefore be the process of renewal. This



process of renewal is the same that is spoken of as "the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant" (v. 15). The transgressions under the first covenant include of course all transgressions whatever belonging to the parties redeemed, for when the new covenant has been made by writing the law upon the people's hearts, further transgression will be impossible, so that eternal possession of the inheritance will be absolutely secure. By "redemption" (*ἀπολύτρωσις*) is meant deliverance from sin through death to sin. The word cannot possibly be confined to what is usually spoken of as the *impetration* of redemption; there is, in fact, no such thing as the impetration of redemption, as that phrase is currently employed. We may distinguish between redemption *in principle* and *final* or *complete* redemption, but the distinction of impetration and application is groundless, misleading, and false, as we have already sufficiently shown. Everywhere in the New Testament, when used with reference to the salvation of sinners, the word is employed to express the entire process of deliverance from sin, which is accomplished through the death of the sinful person by faith, in the power of the Holy Ghost. The process is accomplished in the order of logic or of cause and effect, though not in the order of time, first on the person of Christ, and then on the persons of all believers after the example of Christ. The redemption of Christ's own person was the redemption of the whole world *in principle*, and similarly the redemption effected on the person of each believer, in the first moment of faith, is the redemption of that believer *in principle*; but in neither of these cases would the use of the word impetration serve any other purpose than to mislead. Nor is there the smallest reason to suppose that the distinction of impetration and application has any more foundation in the Old Testament than it has in the New. If the Jewish sacrifices could have effected the redemption of the Jewish people from sin at all, they would have effected it directly in the act of their being offered, not in a separate and subsequent process of application. So much is plainly implied in the passage now before us, which presents the Christian process under the Jewish form, and where we read of "a death having taken place for

the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, in order that they which have been called might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance." Thus, confessedly, the Jewish people, when "called" to enter the land of Canaan, were redeemed or sanctified, though ineffectually, *in a body*, and therefore by means of *a* death (*scil.* on the part of the inaugural victim), and so were prepared to enter *in a body* on the inheritance. But in point of fact believers are effectually sanctified, not by *a* death, but by innumerable deaths from the foundation of the world to its consummation; they enter on the inheritance, not together, but separately through an individual lifelong process whereby God's own possession is redeemed unto the praise of His glory (Eph. i. 14); the promise is coming more and more into the believer's possession during his whole earthly life; it will come into his possession fully and finally only when the process of dying to sin and consequent redemption from sin has been completed.

These remarks may suffice to indicate how totally different the so-called new covenant is from the old which preceded it. The difference is so complete that it is difficult to put one's finger on a single point in which the two transactions resemble each other. Each is apparently a relation between two parties in the formation of which a mediator plays a prominent part; but when we come to look at the two relations, and at the respective functions of the two mediators, we find that they are altogether different. Moses received the law at the hand of angels, couched in the form of commands addressed by God to the people of Israel, and accompanied by a promise in case of obedience; he rehearsed all the words of the law in the ears of the people, and the people answered, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do;" he then slew the sacrificial victim, and sprinkled all the people with blood, and this completed the whole transaction. The essence of the covenant, which was an engagement between God and the whole people of Israel, consisted in the fact that the people were pledged to obey the law, while God was pledged to confer an inheritance in fellowship with himself. The sprinkling with blood is conceived by our author to have aimed at purifying the people prior to their entering on covenant obedience, and the inheri-

tance to which such obedience conferred the title. Jesus, on the other hand, began His work of mediation by assuming human nature, being in Himself the eternal Son of God; He passed through a lifelong course of obedience in the midst of suffering and death, whereby his human nature was redeemed and glorified; and He completes His work by bestowing the grace of His Holy Spirit on each individual believer, so that he, after the example of Christ, passes through a lifelong course of obedience in the midst of suffering and death, whereby his human nature is redeemed and glorified. The process of which these are the principal steps extends from the foundation of the world to its consummation; it was begun, if we may trust our author himself (chap. xi.), long before the formation of the Sinaitic Covenant; it continued throughout the patriarchal period, throughout the Mosaic or legal period, and into the Christian period; and it will end only with the end of time. Now, surely these two things are different from each other. To say that in both cases a relation is constituted between God and a people who are called His is to say almost nothing, for the word relation is the most general word in the language; no two persons or things can exist in the whole universe without bearing some relation to one another; and "every beast of the forest is His" (Ps. l. 10), "the world is His and the fulness thereof" (v. 12). When we are told that Jesus is the Mediator of a covenant between God and the whole body of believers, this really tells us nothing as to the nature of Jesus' work, or as to the state of things which He is the means of bringing into existence. I defy any man to say beforehand what the nature of the Gospel scheme of salvation would be, merely from being told that it would be a covenant, and that the law imposed upon Israel at Sinai was a covenant. All that such a statement could do would be to lead one to suppose that the Gospel was something quite different from what it is—that it was a *bargain* of some kind or other between God and the whole body of believers, which it is not. The law scheme of salvation gives us absolutely no clue to the nature of the Gospel scheme of salvation. To call the Gospel a covenant gives us no more information as to its

character than to call it a new law. In fact, the present writer, by calling the Gospel a covenant, does virtually, and sometimes even expressly, call it a law, as, for example, when he says of Jesus that "He hath obtained a more excellent ministry by how much He is the Mediator of a better covenant, which hath been *legislated* (*νενομοθέτηται*) upon better promises" (viii. 6). But will any one pretend that the Gospel is really and literally a law, or that the word law would of itself convey to the mind any notion whatever of the thing Gospel? If not, it is impossible to pretend anything else of the word covenant or bargain. The Gospel is not even a *figurative* covenant in the usual sense, for when a word is applied figuratively, there is always some obvious and substantial resemblance between the literal thing and the figurative thing, which has given rise to the use of the same name for both; but in the case of the word covenant, as applied to the Gospel, it is impossible to discover any such resemblance; the essential elements of a covenant are all wanting. For example, there are no mutual pledges passed between God and the body of believers. There is no "Do this, and thou shalt live," on the one side, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do," on the other. There is nothing to form the basis of such pledges. God no doubt promised beforehand to send His Son to save the world, or to bestow His Spirit on the human race, and this promise, when viewed as an engagement between God and Abraham or God and the human race—as a pledge given on the one hand and accepted on the other—might be regarded as a covenant (Gal. iii. 8, 15, &c.). But then it is not the promise of God to write the law on the people's hearts that is regarded by the author of Hebrews as the new covenant, for that promise was not mediated by Christ, nor by any one else, nor was it accompanied by the slaughter of a sacrificial victim—things which enter into the very essence of a covenant in our author's conception of it (ix. 15). It is the relation constituted by the fact that the law has been written on the people's hearts that is thought of and spoken of by the author of Hebrews as the new covenant. Now, that relation has nothing whatever in common with the relation constituted by the mutual pledges passed between God and Israel at Sinai.



The relation between husband and wife is a covenant because of the mutual pledges passed when it was entered into ; the relation between master and servant is a covenant for a like reason ; but the relation between God and the redeemed in glory, like that between God and Christ, is not a covenant in any sense. It is, on the one hand, like the relation between father and son, where obedience is given not by contract but out of pure love ; and, on the other hand, like the relation between master and slave, where obedience is given not by contract but through sheer necessity. If it be said that the formation of the Sinaitic covenant was attended by the sprinkling of blood on the people, while the formation of the so-called new covenant is attended by the lifelong sufferings and death of all who enter it, this, though true, is nothing to the purpose, for these two things are as different from each other as the world is wide. What is there in common between the sprinkling of the blood of slaughtered oxen on a whole congregation of people and the lifelong sufferings and death of an indefinite series of individuals engaged in doing well ? It is only inveterate prejudice and habit that could lead any one to suppose there is the least intrinsic resemblance between the two things. On the other hand, if it be said that the process of renewal is followed by obedience in the case of believers as the act of passing the mutual pledges was intended to be followed by obedience in the case of the Israelites, this also may be admitted ; but the obedience which follows renewal in the case of believers no more constitutes the Gospel a covenant than the failure to obey which followed the passing of the pledges in the case of Israel constituted the law not a covenant.

It is not strange, therefore, that the author should not hold very rigidly by the parallel between the Sinaitic covenant and the Gospel dispensation. In the very act of stating it, he passes over to another meaning of the Greek word for covenant (*διαθήκη*), which, if the parallel implied in its introduction were sustained by facts, would have the effect of transforming completely our idea of the Gospel scheme of salvation. This new meaning is brought in for the purpose of proving what is obviously contrary to fact, and therefore cannot be proved—

viz., that before a covenant can be formed there must have been death, either on the part of the contracting parties, or on the part of a sacrificial victim—a conclusion which the author contrives to reach through the logical fallacy of an ambiguous middle term. “For where a *testament* (διαθήκη) is, there must of necessity be the death of him that made it; for a testament is of force where there hath been death; for doth it ever avail while he who made it liveth?” (vv. 16, 17). The argument is: The Scripture asserts that a *covenant* (διαθήκη) will be made between God and His people (viii. 8); and since every *testament* (διαθήκη) must be preceded by the death of Him that made it before it can become valid, therefore the *covenant* (διαθήκη) between God and His people must be preceded by the death of Him that made it before it can become valid. But this argument proves something less, and a great deal more, than is required. It does not prove that Christ, the Mediator of the new covenant, must have died, though this is what the author wishes to prove; for it is not Christ but God who declares that He will make the covenant (viii. 8). The two covenanting parties are distinctly said to be God and the houses of Israel and Judah, neither of which parties is conceived of as dying in order that the covenant might become valid. It does prove that not merely the maker of every διαθήκη [= testament] must die before it can become valid, but that the maker or makers of every διαθήκη [= covenant] must do the same, which is a thoroughly false conclusion. There might be a covenant, such as marriage (Mal. ii. 14), or such as that referred to by the Apostle Paul (Gal. iii. 15), without any death accompanying it at all. Indeed, one might just as legitimately turn the writer’s argument the other way about, and prove that no διαθήκη need have a death attending it, because a certain special kind (*e.g.*, marriage) needs to have none. If the fact that one special kind of διαθήκη requires death in order to its validity, prove that every kind of διαθήκη requires death in order to its validity, then, by parity of reasoning, the fact that one special kind of διαθήκη does not require death in order to its validity, must prove that no kind of διαθήκη can require death in order to its validity. The simple truth is, that the writer’s argument proves nothing as to a

covenant like the Sinaitic, which was *not* a testament. It is, therefore, utterly worthless for the purpose in hand. The argument would be valid only if the Gospel scheme of salvation were not a covenant at all, but a veritable testament, and in this light the author seems for the moment to regard it. And there is really very little to choose between a covenant and a testament, as a type or representation of the Gospel dispensation. The work of redemption is quite as like to the latter transaction as it is to the former; that is, it has hardly any resemblance to either, and of course it cannot at the same time resemble both. The reference to the nature of a testament, in proof of the nature of a covenant, is indeed abortive as a piece of reasoning; but such logical and exegetical devices are quite in keeping with the methods by which New Testament writers endeavour to commend their ideas to the acceptance of their readers. The fact that Christ died, and that His death was necessary to the salvation of the world, was known to the author upon other and quite independent grounds, but this is the method he adopts of proving the fact to the satisfaction of his readers. The word *διαθήκη* is a Scripture word, applied to the future Messianic salvation. If, therefore, it can be plausibly made out that a death is requisite in order to the valid formation of a *διαθήκη*, this will establish the necessity of Christ's death to the satisfaction of readers who bow implicitly to the authority of Scripture. To us the writer's argument appears to weaken the cause which it is meant to support; but then it was not intended for us, but for his original readers, to whom it would doubtless appear in a different light. Anyhow, such arguments plainly indicate that the author is reading his ideas into words that were never meant to convey them, and from which they cannot be extracted by any rational method. The Christian plan of salvation has just as little in common with a covenant, of the form described in the present chapter, as it has with a testament; its nature can be extracted from either or both of these words only by first reading it into them.

Something has been said above as to how the author of Hebrews, in seeking to commend the Gospel to his readers,

endeavours to support his views and reasonings by constant reference to Old Testament Scripture; how the method of interpretation which he adopts and makes use of is manifestly popular and unhistorical, so that the sense which he extracts from an Old Testament passage is never, or almost never, the sense which it was intended to convey; how the results of his exegesis of single passages are sometimes of the most startling character, while the results of his exegesis of separate passages frequently contradict each other; and yet how he attributes all his fanciful notions respecting the Old Testament to the direct authority of the Holy Ghost. It may, therefore, be deemed desirable, before we proceed further, to add a remark or two of a general nature on the author's way of looking at Scripture.

There is no doubt that the author of Hebrews, in common with the other New Testament writers, regards the whole Old Testament as having been dictated by the Holy Ghost, or, as we should say, plenary, and, as it were, mechanically, inspired. It is God that speaks in Scripture, and the words of Scripture, in all its "divers portions" (i. 1), are the words of God pure and simple (i. 5, 6, 7, 13; iii. 7; iv. 3, 7; v. 5, 6; viii. 8, 13; x. 15). Whoever may have been the human author of a passage, the words of the passage are "even as the Holy Ghost saith" (iii. 7), or "beareth witness" (x. 15); and the meaning of Scripture, including the ordinances and arrangements contained in Scripture, is not what the human author may have signified or intended, but what the Holy Ghost signifies and intends (ix. 8). In communicating Scripture, which is the very Word of God, the human author is nowhere, and is scarce worth mentioning—the Holy Ghost is everywhere, and the words are therefore directly ascribed to Him. In short, the human author of Scripture is the mere penman of the Holy Ghost; "for a prophet," as Philo says,\* "is an interpreter, God within him, suggesting to him what should be said;" or, as the (probably) pseudonymous 2 Peter puts it, "No prophecy of Scripture is of *private interpretation* [*ιδίας ἐπιλύσεως* = is an exposition of the writer's own thoughts], for no prophecy ever

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\* *De Præm.* § 9, Mang. ii., p. 417.



came by the will of man, but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost" (i. 20, 21). Even when a Scripture writer appears to be speaking of himself, and recording his own experiences, he is not speaking of himself, but recording the words of Christ in His incarnate state, as dictated to him by the Holy Ghost (Heb. ii. 12, 13; x. 5-7). In the same way Paul asserts that "All Scripture is inspired of God, and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work" (2 Tim. iii. 16); and, again, when interpreting a passage from Ps. lxi., so as to imply that it records the words of Christ in His incarnate state, as dictated beforehand to the human author by the Holy Ghost, he says that "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our teaching" (Rom. xv. 4)—"for our admonition, on whom the ends of the ages are come" (1 Cor. x. 11).

With this notion that Scripture in its every word and letter was directly communicated to the human author by the Holy Ghost is naturally connected another—viz., that all the parts of Scripture must have a profound spiritual sense worthy of their Divine Author. The burden of all the Old Testament writings must be the Christian plan of salvation; every passage that is or can be quoted must have a reference of one kind or another to Gospel facts, persons, or processes; and if a Christian or Messianic sense cannot be elicited by the ordinary method of interpretation, it must be elicited by the typical or allegorical method. Everywhere almost in the Old Testament the Saviour Himself is speaking, and speaking concerning Himself, and the work which God has given Him to do. In Ps. ii., in Ps. viii., in Ps. xviii., in Ps. xxii., in Ps. xl., in Ps. xlv., in Ps. xcv., in Ps. xevii., in Ps. cii., in Ps. cx., in Isaiah viii., and in other similar passages, which means in all Old Testament passages whatever, Messiah or His work is the theme. To suppose anything else would be to suppose that the Holy Ghost occupied Himself in revealing and dictating, if not the merest trifles, at least the most ordinary matters of human observation, such as the every day experiences of Old Testament saints—an idea which cannot for a moment be entertained. "Thou shalt not

muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn," says the author of Deuteronomy (xxv. 4). "Doth God take care for oxen," asks the Apostle Paul, expecting a negative answer, "or saith He it altogether on account of us [the preachers of the Gospel]? Yea, on our account [alone] it was written, that he that ploweth might plow in hope," &c. (1 Cor. ix. 10). It is in this same spirit that the author of Hebrews constantly looks at Scripture.

Now it is unquestionable that the New Testament writers, in so regarding the Old Testament, were not enunciating a new theory either of inspiration or interpretation, they were simply adopting and following out the current theory. The notion that Scripture is fully inspired down to the utmost limits of every phrase, that it has all been written by prophets in a state of ecstasy, having been directly communicated word for word by the Holy Ghost, who operated on the faculties of the human author much in the same way that the hand of a musician operates on his lyre; that it is, therefore, in the most immediate and absolute sense the Word of God, unadulterated by the slightest admixture of anything human; that it can contain nothing trivial, nothing faulty or unworthy of God, nothing that is matter of common experience and observation, and has a bearing merely or chiefly on the daily life of those to whom it was first addressed, but must consist of prophetic oracles (such as the Divine Spirit would be required to reveal) whose meaning is occult and mysterious, and belongs rather to the future than to the present, is beyond all doubt a Jewish scholastic notion which the New Testament writers adopted in the same way that they adopted the typico-allegorical method of interpretation.\*

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\* "For a prophet utters nothing that is *his own* (*ἰδίων*, cf. *ἰδίᾱς*, 2 Pet. i. 20), but everything is foreign, being prompted by another. Neither is it lawful for a wicked man to be an interpreter of God; and therefore no bad man is properly inspired, but the thing is suitable to the wise man alone, since he alone is God's sounding instrument, being beaten and struck invisibly by Him. . . . For these also [Isaac, Jacob] show themselves to be prophets, as by many other circumstances, so especially by their addresses to their children. For 'Assemble yourselves together that I may tell you what shall happen to you in the last days' was the statement of one inspired; for the perception of the future is not natural to man. . . . As long, therefore, as our mind shines around and hovers around,

The whole spirit of the age in which the New Testament was written tended in the direction of such a dead, ossified, mechanical theory of inspiration, and in matters of this kind—matters, that is, of Scripture criticism and exegesis—the New Testament writers were completely dominated by the spirit of the age, so that their testimony on the question of

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pouring as it were a noontide light into the whole soul, we, being masters of ourselves, are not taken possession of; but when it approaches setting, then, as is natural, the ecstasy of inspiration falls upon us—both possession and mania. For when the Divine light shines upon us, the human light sets, and when the former sets, the latter rises and begins to shine. And this is wont to happen to the race of the prophets. For the mind that is in us goes abroad at the arrival of the Divine Spirit, but at His departure it again comes home. For it is not lawful for what is mortal to dwell with what is immortal. . . . For in real truth the prophet, even when he seems to be speaking, is silent, and another Being is employing his vocal organs, his mouth and tongue, for the reporting of whatever He wishes; and, beating these organs with invisible art and perfect musical skill, He produces sounds that are sweet and perfectly harmonious, and full of every kind of melody” —(Philo, *Quis rer. div. her.* § 52, 53, Mang. i., pp. 510, 511).

Such is Philo's view of inspiration, of which we have an echo in the passage of 2 Peter, already quoted. That it coincides exactly with the view underlying our own epistle will hardly be questioned by any one. Both writers alike ignore absolutely the existence of a human element in the inspired writings, identifying the words of Scripture with the words of God in the closest manner possible; both alike are manifestly without even the rudiments of an historical consciousness, and regard Scripture exclusively from the *dogmatic* standpoint; to both prophecy in the sense of prediction is the characteristic feature and the test of an inspired revelation; both find everywhere in the sacred oracles just their own peculiar subjective ideas, the one his system of Greek philosophy, the other his Gospel of Jesus Christ; and both, we may add, imagine that they are specially inspired or divinely guided in interpreting Scripture as they do. If the exegesis of the one appears more forced and unnatural than that of the other, this is due simply to the fact that the doctrines of the Greek philosophy are further removed from the historical sense of the Old Testament than is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. A dogmatic view of Scripture with subjective exegesis is common to both writers as it was universal in the age in which they lived.

The reader who wishes to see the evidence on this important matter more fully gone into than my limits will allow may be referred to *The Inspiration of Holy Scripture*, by William Lee, D.D. (Rivingtons), especially Lect. II., with the relative notes. Dr. Lee, while contending strenuously, and, as I think, successfully (1) that the views of Philo and Josephus on the subject of inspiration were the views universally received among their fellow-countrymen in their own day, and (2) that these views were adopted in all their essentials by Christ and His apostles as well as by later Christian writers, maintains, on the ground of reasons, the force of which altogether escapes my apprehension, that these Jewish scholastic notions, inseparably bound up as they are with the most fantastic allegorical exegesis, are to be accepted as absolutely and infallibly true.

Scripture inspiration possesses no independent value. The manner in which the later Jews transcribed and amended the text of the Old Testament would of itself be sufficient to prove that they held the verbal-dictation theory of inspiration: we know, at any rate, that both the leading schools of Jewish thought at and before the Christian era—the Palestinian or Hebrew, and the Alexandrian or Hellenistic—had embraced a doctrine of inspiration quite identical with that which appears in the New Testament, and that their methods of interpretation, like those of the New Testament writers, were purely artificial and subjective, utterly divorced from history, and having for their aim simply to elicit from the sacred oracles a meaning that, while harmonising with the idea of their immediate Divine origin, should meet the practical exigencies of the interpreter's own day; and we can easily see that the apostles, in reasoning with their contemporaries, could hardly avoid accepting the same or similar views, even if they had known of any other. The mechanical theory of inspiration belongs properly to the Jewish schools. From them it has passed into the New Testament, and thence into the heads of hyper-orthodox modern theologians, who, following the example of the Church Fathers, apply it to the New Testament as well as to the Old. Or rather, perhaps, we ought to say, that modern theologians hold a theory of inspiration, somewhat akin to that which was universally accepted in the apostolic age; for no one at the present time would dare to adopt and defend the verbal-dictation theory in the exact form in which it was held by the Jewish doctors and by the apostles. The plenary inspiration of modern theologians is not the plenary inspiration of the Jewish schools and the New Testament writers, but a diluted, rationalised form of it, a halting half-way accommodation between it and the doctrine suggested by the facts, and held more or less explicitly by all reasonable and candid men. The plenary inspiration of modern theologians is not the mechanical dictation of prophetic oracles, but dynamical assistance in recording matters of history and experience, with perhaps a sprinkling of prophecy in the strict sense of the word,—a work for which each of the human writers of Scripture is thought to have been



specially prepared, and in the execution of which his peculiar qualifications, natural and acquired, are everywhere visible. Just as the orthodox doctrine of the atonement occupies a middle place between the Jewish method of sacrifice, countenanced by the author of Hebrews, and the actual literal method, so the orthodox doctrine of inspiration occupies a middle place between the Jewish theory of mechanical dictation and the theory suggested by a study of the facts. And as in regard to inspiration, so in regard to interpretation. The Messianic interpretation of modern theologians is not the Messianic interpretation of the apostles, nor does the typological interpretation of the one coincide with the typological interpretation of the other. No one would now defend the doctrine that the leading subject of direct discussion in almost every part of the Old Testament is the Christian plan of salvation, and that Christ is introduced speaking in numberless passages where the human writer appears to be simply describing his own experiences. No one would dare to modify and adapt the language of the Old Testament, in the way that the New Testament writers modify and adapt it, for the purpose of bringing out a Messianic sense; as little would any one think of extracting from the plainest historical statements of the Pentateuch a recondite prophetic allusion to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In cases where the New Testament writers have themselves applied their method of exegesis, the result, if it cannot be explained away, must be accepted, however bitter the pill may be; but no one would dream of extending the method to analogous cases; independent Messianic interpretation, so far as it exists, proceeds upon quite different and far more rational lines. Again, scarcely any one professes to accept the typological system of the writer to the Hebrews in its entirety, along with the exegetical reasonings upon which it is based. Who, for example, rests his belief in the typical character of the Jewish sacrificial system, on the fantastic conceit that Moses was shown a model of the earthly tabernacle on Mount Sinai, and that this model was "heaven itself"? If we look into any modern work on the "Typology of Scripture," we shall find that the author pursues a course of his own, paying very

little attention to the results of New Testament typological interpretation, and none at all to the exegetical reasonings by which those results are obtained. In short, the method of Old Testament interpretation, followed by orthodox theologians, is not the method of the apostolic writers, but a diluted, rationalised form of that method, a halting half-way accommodation between it and the historical method of modern times. The method of the apostolic writers is the very method of the Jewish schools, but the method of orthodox theologians is quite different and far more rational.

In saying that the views of the New Testament writers upon inspiration and interpretation are just the views of their contemporaries, it is not meant that they never interpret a passage except upon lines previously sketched, or that there is nothing novel in the *results* of their exegesis. Their *method* of interpretation, so far as they have a method, is identical with that of their contemporaries, and many of the results likewise betray coincidence; but the apostles brought to the Old Testament new ideas touching the person of Christ and the plan of human salvation, and the results of the current exegesis had to be adjusted to these new ideas. So that the exegetical phenomena presented by the New Testament are the outcome of an attempt to combine the popular exegetical method and its results with ideas properly apostolic. It must also be confessed that the apostles quote and handle the text of the Old Testament with a freedom that appears *to us* not quite in harmony with the belief that every word had been dictated by the Holy Ghost. But then we know that the same thing was practised, not only by the Jewish theologians before them, but by the Fathers of the Christian Church afterwards, though all alike held the verbal-dictation theory of inspiration, and held it too with reference to the Greek translation of the LXX., not less than with reference to the original Hebrew. And the thing may be accounted for, partly by the fact that such free handling of the text was unavoidable, if the Old Testament was to be interpreted as they were bent on interpreting it—that is, if it was to be construed throughout in a Messianic sense; partly by the fact that they believed themselves to be Divinely inspired and guided in dealing with the

Old Testament as they did, and seeing in it the details of the Gospel they preached; whilst the utter absence of an historical consciousness would greatly, or it may be totally, blunt their sense of the inconsistency that appears so glaring to us. And, at any rate, not only their express statements, but the very nature of the meanings which they are constantly putting upon Old Testament passages, prove unmistakably that they regarded the whole of Scripture as the Word of God in the most immediate and absolute sense.

When, therefore, the writer to the Hebrews asserts that the Holy Ghost signified 'such or such' (ix. 8), nothing more is implied than that, in the author's judgment, the Old Testament was dictated by the Holy Ghost, and that the popular typico-allegorical method of interpreting the Old Testament was a correct method—both which positions we now know to be thoroughly erroneous and untenable. It is sometimes alleged that we cannot reject the doctrine of plenary inspiration without impugning the *veracity* of the New Testament writers, who evidently held that doctrine, with reference at least to the Old Testament.\* But the question is not a question of *veracity* (in the sense in which that word is commonly used), but a question of *knowledge*. It would be absurd to charge a man with inveracity because he does not happen to be omniscient. A man is chargeable with inveracity only if he states to be true what he knows to be false—a thing which no one alleges against the New Testament writers. There is no doubt whatever, that when the New Testament writers adopt the doctrine of plenary inspiration, and the current scholastic method of Old Testament exegesis, they state to be true what they believe to be true, but there is just as little doubt that they state what is quite inconsistent with demonstrable historical fact (*cf. e.g.,* Heb. x. 5, *seq.*), the reason being that in all such matters their *knowledge* was simply on a level with that of their contemporaries. It does not require an extravagant amount of charity to believe that the doctrine of inspiration universally accepted in the apostolic age was honestly accepted, and that the method of exegesis generally employed was honestly

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\* See, *e.g.,* Westcott, *Introduction to the Study of the Gospels*, Appendix A.

employed: the difficulty is to believe that the same doctrine and the same method can be honestly accepted and employed by learned and intelligent men amid the light of modern times. That both as regards the Old Testament and as regards the New, the plenary theory of inspiration is a false one ought not at this time of day to require to be said, nor should any sober-minded man who knows the facts, and whose conscience has not been drugged by self-interest or something worse, make any pretence of defending it any more than of defending the typical method of interpretation.



## CHAPTER VIII.

OLD TESTAMENT RELIGION ACCORDING TO THE AUTHOR  
OF HEBREWS.

WE said above that the Gospel is no more a covenant in the proper literal sense than it is a law, and we showed that, if the writer to the Hebrews sometimes speaks of it as a covenant, he also sometimes speaks of it as a law—as a scheme *legislated* upon promises (viii. 6). To this we have now to add that the Gospel is no more a law than the law was a Gospel, and that if our author sometimes speaks of the Gospel under the name of the law, he also sometimes speaks of the law under the name of the Gospel. In chaps. iii., iv., he draws a parallel between Israel under Moses at the exodus and believers under Jesus at the time of their spiritual deliverance; but instead of assimilating the circumstances of believers to those of Israel, by presenting the Gospel under the form of the law, he assimilates the circumstances of Israel to those of believers, by presenting the law under the form of the Gospel. The object in view and the method of argument are substantially the same as we meet with elsewhere. The writer proceeds on the basis of Scripture quotations. His aim, as usual, is an immediately practical one, to encourage and stimulate his readers to faith and obedience, or, more strictly, to deter them from unbelief and disobedience, in the midst of the trials to which they were exposed. This is accomplished by first establishing a parallel between the case of Israel and the case of believers, and then holding up the fate of the former as a beacon of warning to the latter—arguing that if Israel suffered the well-known historical penalties as the consequence of unbelief and disobedience, believers must

suffer penalties equally great, or still greater, if they behave in a similar way. He endeavours to show that the law was a message of good tidings, calling the people of Israel to enter into fellowship with God, just as the Gospel is a message of good tidings, calling all who hear it to enter into fellowship with God. By way of proof are adduced two Old Testament passages, which the author quotes, combines, and interprets in a fashion peculiarly his own. One is from Gen. ii. 2, where it is said that "God *rested* (κατέπαυσεν) on the seventh day from all His works" (iv. 4); from which the author infers that there is a definite something called the *Rest* (κατάπαυσις) of God, which God Himself has enjoyed since the works of creation were finished, and which men may share with Him. The other passage is from Ps. xcv., and is in the following terms:—"To-day if ye hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, like as in the day of temptation in the wilderness, wherewith your fathers tempted Me by proving Me, and saw My works forty years. Wherefore I was displeased with this generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart: but they have not known My ways; as I swear in My wrath, they shall not enter into My rest" (κατάπαυσίν μου, iii. 7-11).

These words, which were really addressed to the Jews, probably in the time of the exile, are understood by the writer of our epistle to have been addressed to the hearers of the Gospel in his own time. "To-day" is identified with the Christian era (iii. 13), and "His voice" with the voice of God, who "at the end of these days hath spoken unto us in His Son" (i. 2). The "rest" of God, which the writer of the Psalm used as a descriptive synonym for Canaan, is identified with the "rest" of God spoken of in Gen. ii. 2, from which Israel at the exodus is supposed to have fallen short through unbelief, which was never offered to any one subsequent to that time (iv. 4-7), and which is therefore still in reserve; and the "word of hearing" (iv. 2), to which the "voice" gives utterance, is represented as a message of good tidings, "calling" (iii. 1) a people to enter into that rest and share it with God, which they may and ought to do by faith (iv. 2). In this way the author reads the Gospel into the framework

of the Psalm by the help of the passage in Genesis. And he does so without in the least modifying its essential nature. For the Gospel is in truth a message of good tidings, calling a people to enter by faith into rest in fellowship with God. But when the Psalm is so interpreted, we discover at once that the same identical rest which is offered to believing Christians in the Gospel must have been offered to believing Israelites in the law, in other words, that the law must have been a message of good tidings, calling a people to enter by faith into rest in fellowship with God, just as the Gospel is a message of good tidings, calling a people to enter by faith into rest in fellowship with God. If believers under the Christian dispensation can be warned against unbelief and hardness of heart by the example of Israel at the exodus, on the ground that the circumstances of Israel at the exodus era were in all respects identical with the circumstances of believers at the Christian era—that the voice speaking was the same (the voice of God), the nature of the message or word spoken the same (good tidings), the thing offered, or promised, or to which men were invited, the same (the rest into which God entered at creation), the condition of acceptance or compliance the same (faith)—then it follows that the law, which was spoken to Israel through Moses, is here represented as absolutely identical with the Gospel, which is spoken to us through Jesus—just as the relation constituted between God and Israel on the basis of the law through the mediation of Moses is elsewhere represented, if not as absolutely identical, at least as very similar to the relation constituted between God and believers on the basis of the Gospel through the mediation of Jesus (viii., *seq.*)—and that Canaan is here represented as absolutely identical with heaven—just as heaven is elsewhere represented, if not as absolutely identical, at least as very similar to Canaan (ix. 15; xii. 18, *seq.*)

There is no manner of doubt that the above is a true account of the meaning of the whole passage. “Exhort one another day by day, so long as it is called To-day; lest any one of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. . . . Let us fear, lest haply, the promise being left of entering into His rest, any one of you should seem to have come short of it:

for indeed we have had the Gospel preached to us, even as also they [*cf.* "Now the first covenant also (as well as the second) had ordinances of service and its sanctuary," &c. (ix. 1); "Wherefore, not even the first covenant (much less the second) hath been dedicated without blood" (ix. 18)], but the word of hearing did not profit them, because they were not united by faith with them that heard. . . . Seeing therefore it remaineth that some should enter into ['His rest'], and they to whom the Gospel was before preached [*scil.* Israel at the exodus] failed to enter in because of disobedience, He again defineth a certain day. . . . If Joshua had given them rest, He would not have spoken afterwards of another day. There remaineth therefore a sabbath [=heavenly] rest to the people of God; for he that is entered into 'His rest' hath himself also rested from his works, [as the saints do in heaven (Rev. xiv. 13), and] as God did from His. Let us therefore give diligence to enter into that rest [of 'His'], that no man fall after the same example of disobedience" (iii. 13; iv. 1, 2, 6-11). It is clear from these quotations that the inheritance set before Israel at the exodus was the same spiritual, heavenly inheritance that is set before all men now, that it was then offered to Israel in a message of good tidings, as it is now offered to all men in a message of good tidings, and that faith was the means of appropriation for Israel then, as it is the means of appropriation for all men now. The writer distinctly infers that Israel must have fallen short of God's rest simply *through want of faith*, because, in present experience, faith is the means of attaining thereunto; "for," says he, "we who *have believed* are entering into the rest" (iv. 3).

It would, of course, be idle to think of reconciling this view of the manner in which the inheritance was offered to Israel, and of the manner in which Israel fell short of it, with other representations on the same subject which the epistle contains. Elsewhere, and particularly throughout chapters viii., ix., and x., the author's representation is that the inheritance offered to Israel was the same inheritance indeed as is now offered to us, but that, instead of being offered unconditionally in a message of good tidings, it was attached conditionally to the Sinaitic covenant or the law; and the reason why Israel fell short was



not that they lacked faith to profit by the good tidings which they heard, but that they continued not in the covenant which they had come under obligation to obey (viii. 9), while the ritual system of the covenant was wholly unable to take away their sins, or perfect them as pertaining to the conscience (x. 1, *seq.*). When the writer speaks of the inheritance as attached to the old covenant, there is no notion of faith in connection with it, for, as the Apostle Paul says, "the law is not of faith, but the man that doeth them shall live in them" (Gal. iii. 12). And the new covenant, though assimilated as far as possible to the old, is so far from being spoken of as the same identical Gospel, the same promise of rest, which Israel heard and received (iv. 1, 2), that, on the contrary, it is spoken of as a better covenant which hath been legislated upon better promises, as a better hope through which we draw nigh to God (viii. 6; vii. 19). Nor will it avail to urge that the generation which came out of Egypt by Moses had the Gospel preached to them as well as the law, that the inheritance was offered to them unconditionally as well as conditionally, and that they fell short, not merely and simply because they failed to obey the law, but because, in addition to this, they refused to believe the Gospel. This will not meet the difficulty. For though the writer agrees with Paul in holding that God made an unconditional promise to Abraham, which Abraham obtained through faith and endurance (vi. 13-15); and though he indicates with sufficient plainness that faith in that or a similar promise was a means of salvation from the time of Abel downwards (xi., *passim*); yet, on the other hand, he distinguishes in the passage before us two periods and two only, when the good tidings were preached,—when the word was spoken and the inheritance offered,—the period of the exodus and "to-day" (iv. 6, 7); he evidently thinks of the invitation as conveyed to the people by an authoritative "voice," co-ordinate in importance with that which was heard in the Son; and he infers from the words of the Psalm that if Israel had complied with the voice in the time of Moses, the promise would not have been left over, and the voice would not again have been heard (vv. 8, 9). Now we know that the writer constantly sets over against each other the law, as the

former revelation of God, and the Gospel, as the latter revelation of God ; that he distinguishes the word spoken through angels from the things which were heard (ii. 1-4), the word spoken through the Son (i. 2); that he contrasts the voice heard at Sinai and the voice heard at Zion (xii. 19, 25), declaring that if they escaped not who disregarded the one, much less shall we escape if we disregard the other (v. 25); that he compares and contrasts the first covenant made at the exodus through Moses, and the new covenant made "to-day" through Christ (vii., viii., &c.), alleging that if the first covenant had not failed of its object, the second would never have been made (viii. 7), that there is a disannulling of a foregoing commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness, and a bringing in thereupon of a better hope through which we draw nigh unto God (vii. 18, 19), and more to the same effect. Surely it is inconceivable that in chapters iii., iv. the Gospel of Jesus Christ should be compared to a grand epoch-making revelation of the will of God made to Israel at the exodus, that elsewhere throughout the epistle the same Gospel of Jesus Christ should in like manner be compared to a grand epoch-making revelation of the will of God made to Israel at the exodus, and yet that these two epoch-making revelations of the will of God to Israel, which were made at the same time, and under the same circumstances, and to both of which the Gospel of Jesus Christ is compared, should not only be quite distinct, but should have no manner of connection with one another ! Besides, there is absolutely no historical foundation for the supposition of a Gospel revelation to Israel at the exodus, co-ordinate in importance with the Gospel revelation to us through Christ. There was, at the exodus, no hearing of a voice calling to enter God's rest by faith, in the same manner that the voice of Christ is heard "to-day" calling to enter God's rest by faith. Indeed, the idea that a grand Gospel invitation to enter the Divine inheritance by faith was issued simultaneously with the grand law invitation to enter the same Divine inheritance by obedience is manifestly out of the question; two such invitations could not possibly stand together; nor could the people be said to have perished for refusing to comply with the one, when in point of fact they

perished for refusing to comply with the other. What our author himself says elsewhere as to the presence of the Gospel in Old Testament times is to quite a different effect. He holds, no doubt, that the Gospel was present under the old covenant, and even before the old covenant was made; but it was present equally throughout the whole course of Israelitish history; it was present, not as an abortive early revelation made through Moses, but as a projection backward of the one effectual revelation made through Christ; if there was any occasion when it was specially spoken or preached, that occasion was not at the exodus, but in the time of Abraham. There is no trace elsewhere in the epistle of a contrast between the Gospel as spoken through Christ and the same Gospel as spoken to believers under the Old Testament. Nor do we meet, in precisely the same shape, with the startling position that entrance by faith into the rest of God was possible, and took place, only on two occasions, when the Gospel was specially preached, at the exodus and "to-day." It appears certain, therefore, that what the writer refers to under the name of "the Gospel formerly preached" (iv. 6) is nothing else than the law, the word spoken through angels (ii. 2), the revelation to which Moses bore testimony (iii. 5).

The truth evidently is, that the author's exegesis of the two Old Testament passages which he quotes yields a result irreconcilably at variance with the conclusions drawn from other passages, and more particularly from those quoted and interpreted in chap. viii. We have here just another example of the same phenomenon which we met in the two-fold representation of the priesthood of Christ. If Christ were a priest after the order of Melchizedek, glorified and seated at God's right hand, His functions could have no resemblance whatever to those of Aaron, and no comparison could possibly be instituted between the two; and, in like manner, if the revelation made to Israel through Moses were a message of good tidings, identical with that made to us through Jesus, it could not possibly be the basis of a covenant identical with what our author conceives the Sinaitic to have been; nor, conversely, could the revelation made to us through Jesus be what our author here admits it to be, a message of good tidings requiring

only the assent of faith, and yet be the basis of a covenant similar to, if not identical with, the Sinaitic. Some of the conclusions involved in our author's exegesis are indeed curious enough, almost as curious as those having reference to the historical Melchizedek. When he says, for example, that Israel under Joshua could not have attained to the rest of God, because in that case the rest would not have remained over to be offered to us "to-day" (iv. 6-8), the idea is quite extravagant—as if heaven would have been filled choke full with a single generation of Israelites! Again, when he speaks of those to whom the Gospel was formerly preached failing to enter in because of disobedience, and of God as again defining a certain day to afford a second opportunity of entering (vv. 6, 7), it is clearly implied that no one entered the rest of God, that no one even had an opportunity of doing so, from the time of Moses to the time of Christ. But the writer himself expressly contradicts this, when he exhorts his readers to "be imitators of those who through faith and endurance are inheriting the promises" (vi. 12, *seq.*), recounting a long line of worthies who lived and died in faith (xi.), among whom are those who came out of Egypt by Moses (v. 29), as well as those who entered the promised land by Joshua (v. 30).

Perhaps it will be said that, when the author speaks of the rest of God as having been offered on but two occasions, to Israel at the exodus and to us "to-day," he refers not to the perfect rest in heaven (xii. 23), which all Old Testament saints might and did enter by faith, but to a *perfect rest on earth*, such as none of the Old Testament saints obtained (xi. 39, 40), such as Israel at the exodus was alone offered, and such as the author expected in his own day (ix. 28). And it may be thought that when he speaks of believers *seeming* (δοκῆ, iv. 1) to have fallen short, the expression points to the case of Israel at the exodus, who, though they really entered the rest of God (xi. 29, 39, 40), yet *seemed* to have fallen short of it, by not attaining to it on earth as originally offered, believers in like manner being warned, not against falling short of God's rest absolutely, but against *seeming* to have fallen short of it, by perishing through unbelief before the Second Coming, which their unbelief would delay. But not to insist



on the extreme artificiality of such a view, it is quite opposed to the whole tone of the warnings throughout the epistle, as well as to the drift of the argument in the immediate context. The writer's warnings are not against *seeming* to fall short of salvation, but against really falling short of it (vi. 1-12 ; x. 26-39 ; xii. 25-29). And when he says, for example, that "the word of hearing did not profit them (=the Israelites), because they were not united by faith with them that heard," while, on the other hand, "we who have believed are entering into the rest," this evidently implies that the Israelites were entirely destitute of that faith which we possess, that they derived no benefit whatever from the Gospel preached to them, and could not have entered the rest of God at any time or in any sense. Besides, the above view, even if admitted, would not relieve the difficulties, for there is no trace of a special Gospel message offering the fellowship of God in a special manner to Israel at the exodus. The promise given to Abraham offered the fellowship of God as fully as it was ever offered to any one in Old Testament times, and that promise descended as a legacy to all Abraham's seed (xi. 9), to Israel at the exodus not less or more than to subsequent generations. The law itself was of the same nature, for the covenant made at Sinai was open to be acquiesced in by the nation ever after, so that, had the condition been fulfilled at any period by Israel, the promise on God's part would not have been wanting.

The truth of the matter has been already stated. The author wishes to drive home a practical exhortation. He adduces two Old Testament quotations, and reasons upon them. These quotations, as he interprets them, imply that God issued a Gospel call to Israel at the exodus co-ordinate in importance with the one issued through Jesus Christ, and that Israel rejected the call, and perished through unbelief, as the hearers of the Gospel "to-day," if they do the same, will "all likewise perish." They imply, also, that no Gospel call was issued to any one from the time of the exodus to the time of Christ, and that no one during that period did or could enter into fellowship with God through believing the Gospel. These conclusions are utterly at variance with the writer's teaching in other parts of the epistle. What is referred

to under the name "Gospel" is just the law given by the hand of Moses to Israel. And the law was not a Gospel gratuitously offering an inheritance on condition of faith, any more than the Gospel is a law offering an inheritance by way of reward on condition of obedience; *at least the author in the main body of his epistle does not look upon either the law or the Gospel in such a light.* The law is elsewhere represented as a scheme of salvation entirely distinct from the Gospel, and greatly inferior to it in every respect,—as a weak and unprofitable commandment in contrast to a better hope (vii. 18, 19),—as a carnal commandment in contrast to the power of an indissoluble life (v. 16)—carnal ordinances imposed until a time of reformation (ix. 10)—as having only a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things (x. 1.)—as being obviously and necessarily unable to effect the object at which it aimed (v. 4; ix. 9). Elsewhere, also, the Gospel is represented as preached, not merely to Abraham and all his descendants (vi. 13, *seq.*), but to men from the time of Abel to the time of Christ (xi.). These difficulties, however, do not trouble our author. His practical point has been gained, and that is all he is concerned about. Objections of the kind just adverted to would never be raised by his original readers, who would accept his method of exegesis, and its result too, entirely without question.

Reference has already been made to the teaching of chap. xi. That chapter is in many respects of a piece with the passage now discussed, and its language is to be explained upon similar principles. In chap. x. 38, the writer quotes as if from Habakkuk ii. 4 the words, "But My righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrink back, My soul hath no pleasure in him." As usual, our author follows the LXX., though he transposes the two clauses, and the LXX. in this, as in many other instances, has departed considerably from the Hebrew original. The prophet's words are, "Behold his soul is puffed up, it is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faithfulness," words which are spoken with reference to "the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, which march through the breadth of the earth to possess dwelling-places that are not theirs" (i. 6). The "My" inserted before "righteous" is due to the

LXX., and is referred by the author of Hebrews to God, as is also the “My” before “soul” in the following clause; while the words “faith,” or “faithfulness,” and “shall live,” are both understood in their specifically Christian senses. Thus the former clause of the verse is held to teach that the only means whereby any man can attain to righteousness and life is *faith*, and consequently that the means whereby every righteous man that ever lived attained to righteousness and life must have been faith. The latter clause, which is wholly mistranslated and perverted from its historical meaning and reference, is held to supply the negative counterpart to the same thought—viz., that unbelief is the sure path to perdition. The outcome of the two clauses combined is that faith in God is the principle of righteousness and life, and that apart from faith in God righteousness and life are impossible (xi. 6). It follows that all the righteous men of Old Testament times must have been believers, and that the works which gave them their character must have been works performed through faith. The words quoted from the prophet are true universally of men in every age of the world’s history, but as they were spoken in Old Testament times, and with special reference to Old Testament circumstances, they must be especially true of the heroes of Old Testament history, and of the deeds of renown which have shed lustre around their names. Accordingly, the author proceeds to run down the roll of those who in Old Testament times obtained witness, explicit or implicit, that they were righteous, signalling in particular the most notable deeds of their lives, and asserting in each case that faith was their animating source and principle. “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the proving of things not seen. For therein the elders had witness borne to them [*scil.* that they were righteous (v. 4)] . . . By faith Abel *offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice* than Cain, through which he had witness borne to him that he was righteous. . . . By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and he was not found, because God translated him: for before his translation he had witness borne to him that he had been well-pleasing unto God; and without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto Him: for he *that draweth nigh to God*

must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that seek after him" (xi. 1, 2, 4-6). Then follow references to Noah, Abraham, and Sarah, and the author proceeds: "Wherefore sprang there of one [Abraham], and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of heaven in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea-shore innumerable. *These all* died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things make it manifest that they are seeking after a country of their own. And if indeed they had been mindful of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return; but now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He hath prepared for them a city (vv. 12-16). . . . By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, accounting *the reproach of Christ* greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, for he looked unto the recompense of reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king, for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible. By faith he *kept the passover and the sprinkling of the blood*, that the destroyer of the first-born should not touch them. By faith *they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land*, which the Egyptians assaying to do were swallowed up. By faith *the walls of Jericho fell down*, after they had been compassed about for seven days (vv. 24-30). . . . And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah; of David and Samuel and the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, &c. . . . Women received their dead by a resurrection, and others were tortured not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection; and others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment; they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were tried, they were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheepskins, in goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, evil entreated



(of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves, and the holes of the earth. And *these all*, having had witness borne to them [*scil.*, that they were righteous] through their faith, received not the promise, God having provided some better thing for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect. Therefore let us also [as well as them] . . . run with patient endurance," &c. (32-40 ; xii. 1).

There can be no mistake as to the drift of these quotations. Loosely speaking, we might say that the writer is here again drawing a parallel between Old Testament and New, and basing an exhortation upon it ; but there is this peculiarity in the present case, that the parallel is absolute, being unconnected with any element of contrast, so that it would be more correctly described as an identity. According to the present chapter, there is absolute correspondence and continuity between Old Testament and New. The law and the Gospel, Judaism and Christianity, mean exactly the same thing. Or, rather, there is no such thing as law as opposed to Gospel. And there is no such thing as Judaism as opposed to Christianity. The revelation of God's will was Gospel from the very beginning, and the religion of Israel was Christian from the very beginning. The men of Old Testament times were situated and circumstanced exactly as the men of New Testament times are situated and circumstanced. It is not here, as in chaps. iii. and iv., that the same Gospel which is preached to all men under the New Testament was preached to a single generation under the Old Testament, and preached ineffectually : what we are here taught is that the Gospel was preached throughout the whole Old Testament period in the form of promises (vv. 13, 39, 40 ; *cf.* vi. 13, *seq.*), just as it shall be preached throughout the whole of the New Testament period in the same form (v. 40 ; vi. 18), and that it was believed unto salvation under the Old Testament very much as it is and shall continue to be under the New. That the substance of the promise which Old Testament saints accepted and believed was identical with the import of the Gospel message which New Testament saints likewise believe is quite manifest, for it is spoken of as heaven (v. 5), the city which hath the foundations whose Builder and Maker is God

(v. 10), a better country, that is, an heavenly (v. 16), the reward of fellowship with Christ in His sufferings (v. 26, *cf.* Phil. iii. 10, 11 ; Rom. viii. 17, &c.). In fact, as already indicated, the promises formerly made to Old Testament believers are once and again *identified* with those made to New Testament believers (vi. 13-18 ; xi. 13, 39, 40). And these promises appear to be attached to every revelation of the will of God made in Old Testament times. They are attached, for example, to the command to offer sacrifice as Abel did (v. 4), to the command to build the ark as Noah did (v. 7), to the command to leave his country and kindred and sojourn in a strange land (vv. 8, 9), as well as to the command to offer up Isaac (vv. 17-19), as Abraham did, to the command or premonition to preserve Moses as his parents did (v. 23), to the command or duty to refuse the crown of Egypt (v. 24), to choose rather to be evil entreated with the people of God (v. 25), to forsake Egypt (v. 27), to keep the passover and the sprinkling of blood (v. 28), as Moses did, to pass through the Red Sea as Israel under Moses did (v. 29), to compass the walls of Jericho seven days as Israel under Joshua did (v. 30), to receive the spies in peace as Rahab the harlot did (v. 31), to do the life-work of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets (v. 32), nay, the life-work of all the innumerable seed of Abraham (vv. 12, 13) down to the latest periods of Old Testament history (vv. 35-39). The mention of Abel's offering, and Moses' keeping of the passover, proves that the promise is thought of as attached to the keeping of the ceremonial part of the law, and there is no doubt that the life-work of such Old Testament characters as David and the prophets, not to speak of later generations, was to keep the whole law of God, so far as it had been revealed. It appears certain, therefore, that the entire circle of Old Testament revelation is here regarded as Gospel and a means of salvation through faith, in like manner as the entire circle of New Testament revelation is Gospel and a means of salvation through faith. The way of salvation under the Old Testament was through believing that God is, and that He is a rewarder of them that seek after Him (v. 6), or through obeying His revealed will in the strength that He Himself supplies to

them that put their trust in Him, and this is just the way of salvation under the New Testament. On this view, there is no antithesis between law and promise, or law and Gospel, or letter and spirit, such as we find in Paul's writings, and such as the present writer himself favours in other connections. The promises made to Abraham were made on condition that he and his seed should obey the then revealed will of God *through faith*; the promises attached to the Sinaitic Covenant were made on exactly the same condition, that Israel should obey the then revealed will of God *through faith*; and, of course, the presence of faith implies the presence of the Divine Spirit, and this again implies that the law is no longer the letter that killeth but the spirit that giveth life, or that law and Gospel are one and the same thing. The Old Testament does not differ from the New, in respect that the former contains legal precepts and the latter not. Both alike are full of legal precept for the guidance of human conduct. The only difference is that the precepts of the New Testament gospels and epistles are far more numerous, far more detailed, and far more fully developed than the precepts of the Old Testament Pentateuch and prophets—at any rate, if we leave out of account those precepts of the Old Testament which are not regarded as binding in the New. When an antithesis is drawn between law and Gospel, the word law is used to denote the objective revealed will of God *minus* the spirit of faith through which alone obedience can be rendered, while the word Gospel is used to denote the spirit of faith through which obedience can be rendered *minus* the objective revealed will of God. In this way law and Gospel are mutually exclusive, and may be contrasted with each other as dead letter and living spirit. But if we include under the meaning of the word law the promise of the spirit of faith which accompanied the communication of the will of God in Old Testament times, and if we include under the meaning of the word Gospel the communication of the will of God which accompanies the promise of the spirit of faith in New Testament times, then law and Gospel become absolutely identical and interchangeable; they become parts of a single, continuous, homogeneous dispensation of religion; and it is in this light

that the author of Hebrews regards them in the chapter before us.

How completely the present view of Old Testament religion differs from the view set forth in chaps. iii., iv. hardly requires to be pointed out. We saw, in examining the last-named chapters, that the writer's argument involved the sweeping and startling conclusion that no one in the whole course of Israelitish history from Moses to Christ attained to salvation, and received the heavenly rest, that no one had even an opportunity of doing so, with the exception of the single generation that came out of Egypt by Moses. In chapter xi. the exigencies of the writer's argument have so totally changed that he appears to represent every one, not only in the whole course of Israelitish history from Moses to Christ, but every one descended from Abraham (v. 13), and, in addition, the elders before Abraham (v. 2), as attaining to salvation and inheriting the heavenly rest. Previous to Abraham's time, at least Cain (v. 4), and the generation contemporary with Noah (v. 7), perished through unbelief; but subsequent to Abraham's time we read of no one belonging to the chosen seed that fell short of salvation. And when the writer, after stating that "there sprang of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of heaven in multitude and as the sand which is by the sea-shore innumerable," follows up the statement by the explicit assertion that "*these all died in faith*," it is sheer arbitrariness to introduce any limitation, as for example by saying that only a certain elected number of Abraham's descendants were saved in any period of Old Testament history. All the more unwarrantable will such a limitation appear, if we consider that when the author proceeds to give the details which his general assertion involves, he includes in the number of the saved the generation that passed through the Red Sea with Moses (v. 29; cf. v. 25), whom he had previously doomed to perdition (iii. 16, 17), as well as the generation that compassed the walls of Jericho with Joshua (v. 30), whose salvation he had declared to be incompatible with the salvation of any one else (iv. 8, 9); while he winds up the detailed account by repeating the general assertion that "*these all* had witness borne to them [*scil.*, that they were righteous] through their



faith" (v. 39). Was any subsequent generation of Israelites more likely to have contained unbelievers than the generation that came out of Egypt with Moses, or, for that matter, than the generation that compassed the walls of Jericho with Joshua? Surely not. And therefore we must suppose the writer's idea to be that the chosen people as such were "the people of God" (v. 25), that in all their sufferings and vicissitudes of fortune, they were suffering and enduring for Christ's sake (v. 26); that the covenant made at Sinai was identical in nature with the covenant made with Abraham (vi. 13); that it was made through faith in Christ, and kept through faith in Christ, and that God Himself was surety that the conditions *on both sides* should be carried out; in other words, that the so-called dispensation of law was absolutely identical with the Gospel dispensation *in so far as the latter is effectual*, that is, in so far as it concerns the elect. This means that "the people of God" under the Old Testament dispensation were the exact counterpart of "the people of God" under the New, and since the people of God under the Old Testament dispensation were the whole body of Israelites, while the people of God under the New are the whole body of believers, it follows that the whole body of Israelites must here be regarded as being believers. If objection be taken to such a conclusion that it is manifestly quite at variance with historical fact, it is sufficient to reply that it has manifestly not been reached by a process of induction from historical fact, but by a process of deduction from the isolated Old Testament text quoted in the close of the previous chapter. Hence we can easily understand how there is just as utter an absence of unbelieving Israelites in chap. xi. as there is an utter absence of believing Israelites in chaps. iii. and iv., and how in these earlier chapters the writer's practical exhortation is purely negative, being directed to *dissuading* his readers from imitating the example of Israel, whereas in the later chapter his practical exhortation is purely positive, being directed to *persuading* his readers to imitate the example of Israel (xii. 1). There is no doubt that the promises made to Abraham and to his seed included especially the land of Canaan, which all the people of God were intended to enter and possess; and as the

import of these Abrahamic promises in chap. xi., not less than in chaps. iii. and iv., is identified with heaven, all the seed of Abraham must here be thought of as entering heaven, just as they are all thought of as falling short of heaven in chapters iii. and iv. The author has no more intention, either in chap. xi., or in chaps. iii. and iv., of distinguishing between a natural Israel and a spiritual Israel, between a natural seed of Abraham and a spiritual seed of Abraham, than he has of distinguishing between a natural rest of God, and a spiritual rest of God, or a natural heaven and a spiritual heaven. There is one, and only one, proffered heavenly inheritance which believers obtain under the Gospel, and as all the seed of Abraham are represented as falling short of that inheritance through unbelief in chaps. iii. and iv., so they are all represented as obtaining it through faith in chap. xi., the reason of course being that the quotation from which chap. xi. is deduced yields an opposite result to the quotations from which chaps. iii. and iv. are deduced. It would therefore be absurd to think of reconciling the representation of Old Testament religion contained in the present passage with that contained in the passage last discussed: the two representations are *diametrically opposed* to each other.

But further, if the view of Old Testament religion presented in chap. xi. differs completely from the view presented in chaps. iii. and iv., it differs just as completely from the view presented in chaps. viii., ix., and x. For the argument of these last chapters implies, quite as distinctly as the argument of chaps. iii. and iv., that no one in Old Testament times was or could possibly be saved. This may appear a strong assertion, both in itself and in view of some things that have been said above, and, therefore, a word of explanation is necessary. We have spoken of the new covenant as projected back through the whole extent of the Old Testament period. We have said that it began to be formed from the very foundation of the world, or at least from the time of Abel, and that it will be completely formed only at the final consummation of the ages. And this manner of speech could hardly be avoided if we were to convey a just idea of what we believe to be the true state of the case as regards the

history of the world's redemption. But, undoubtedly, such language is fitted somewhat to mislead the mind. The word *covenant*, as applied to the dispensation of grace, is not ours, but the author's whose opinions we are discussing, and it might be thought, when we used the expression *new covenant*, and stated what is the nature of the thing referred to, that we were presenting our author's view of what the new covenant is, and how it comes into existence. That, however, is a mistake. When we stated how the new covenant is formed, we stated not how our author conceives and represents it to be formed, but how as a matter of literal fact the eternal redemption of the world through Jesus Christ is carried out. Our author's conception of how the new covenant is formed is based, not on a literal view of how the world is actually redeemed through Jesus, but on a literal view of how the Sinaitic covenant was formed through Moses. According to him, the earlier Sinaitic covenant, having been instituted in the time of Moses, continued in force as long as the first tabernacle continued to stand (ix. 8), or, in plain terms, as long as the rites of the old dispensation continued to be practised ; during the whole of "the present time" (v. 9) ; down to "the time of reformation" (v. 10) ; to "the consummation of the ages" (v. 26), which is conceived to have practically coincided with the death of Christ. In other words, the old covenant continued in force throughout the whole of what we are accustomed to speak of as the Old Testament period, always excepting the pre-Mosaic or patriarchal age, when there was no covenant at all. On the other hand, and in correspondence to this, the new covenant is conceived to have been initiated by the death of Christ (ix. 15) in much the same way as the old covenant was initiated by the death of the inaugural victim (vv. 18, 19). It was brought in upon the old after the latter had been disannulled as weak and unprofitable (vii. 18, 19). No place could have been found for a new covenant unless the old had first been taken out of the way (viii. 7). The author no where speaks of the new covenant as being projected back to the beginning of the world, and as co-existing alongside of the old, in the manner that we represented. On the contrary, he distinctly

holds that the two cannot permanently exist together, and that the bringing in of the one must have the effect of superseding and abolishing the other. The very name *new* covenant implies that it came in only after the first covenant had become old and was nigh unto vanishing away (v. 13). It is only for a brief transitional period that the two covenants are thought of as existing together. If the new covenant had been in process of initiation from the foundation of the world, the old could never have existed at all, seeing that "no place would have been sought for" it (v. 7). The very *raison d'être* of the new covenant lies in the faultiness, weakness, unprofitableness of the old, and it were absurd to suppose that men would have continued to play the solemn farce of acting in the capacity of parties to an old covenant that was already proclaimed to be worthless by the introduction of a new to take its place. Accordingly, not till the days of which the Lord through the prophet had spoken is the new covenant thought of as being made (v. 8, *seq.*); and these days coincide with the fulness of time, when Christ came (ix. 11); with the last of these days, when the Gospel began to be spoken (i. 2); with the time of reformation, when the carnal ordinances were to be done away (ix. 10); with the consummation of the ages, when Christ was manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself (v. 26).

Now, since the only covenant in force during the whole of the Old Testament period was the old covenant, and since that covenant was weak and profitless, outward, carnal, shadowy, and evanescent, in one word, absolutely nugatory for purposes of salvation, since the new covenant, and that alone, has true saving validity, it follows that no one during the entire course of Old Testament history was or could possibly be saved. It will not do to evade this inference by alleging that "the seed of Abraham," who were parties to the old covenant were really sanctified and saved, but that their sins were not "expiated" till the initiation of the new covenant in the fulness of time, for what our author means by expiation is just redemption, purification, or sanctification. When he says of Christ that He taketh not hold of angels but of the seed of Abraham (ii. 16), and that He became a merciful and



faithful High Priest, in order to expiate the sins of the people (v. 17), the seed of Abraham or the people referred to is not the whole body of Abraham's descendants, but simply the writer's own believing contemporaries. The parties to the new covenant are "we" (vii. 19), "us" (v. 26), "we" (viii. 1), "you" (ix. 14), "us" (v. 24), "we" (x. 10), "us, brethren" (vv. 19, 20),—all which pronouns refer simply to the writer and his contemporaries, to the generation subsequent to the coming and death of Christ, in contrast to all previous generations, mainly indeed to the Christian Hebrews to whom the epistle is addressed. Hence "the transgressions under the first covenant" (ix. 15) are nothing else than the transgressions of the apostle's own Christian contemporaries before they were renewed and sanctified through faith in Christ. If "the transgressions under the first covenant," which the death of Christ redeemed, were, as they are commonly imagined to have been, the transgressions of all who had ever been parties to the first covenant, this would imply not only that all who ever were parties to the first covenant are actually saved—a thoroughly false conclusion as we know—but that they were kept in some sort of *limbus patrum* till Christ came and redeemed them, a position that few Protestants will be disposed to maintain. Speaking of the literal history of the world's redemption, we have asserted that the transgressions under the first covenant include all the transgressions of all believers from the foundation of the world to its consummation; but speaking of our author's conception of the new covenant, we must assert that the transgressions under the first covenant include merely the transgressions of those who are conceived to be parties to that covenant, those who are "called" in connection with it, and these belong exclusively to the author's own generation, being practically identified with his own readers. I take it to be beyond all doubt that the author represents the new covenant as being made with a single generation, in much the same way as the old covenant was made with a single generation; the proclamation of the Gospel at Zion by Jesus corresponds to the proclamation of the law at Sinai by Moses; while the death of Jesus answers to the death of the inaugural

victim. This is what gives an air of plausibility to the author's parallel between the two covenants, which it would not otherwise possess ; for when the new covenant is thought of as formed with the generation contemporary with Jesus, in the way that the Sinaitic covenant was formed with the generation contemporary with Moses, it can also be thought of as being acquiesced in by subsequent generations, in the way that the Sinaitic covenant was acquiesced in by subsequent generations. But it is evident that all this seeming parallelism is purchased at the expense of consigning the entire pre-Christian world to perdition. Such a consequence, indeed, arises naturally and inevitably out of the construction which the author puts on the passage which he quotes from the prophet Jeremiah. For when the antithesis between the two covenants, which was in reality a relative antithesis, the Sinaitic covenant having been only relatively and not absolutely a failure, is regarded as absolute, and identified with the antithesis between the dead naturalistic Judaism of the apostolic age and the living spiritual Christianity of the apostolic age, then the new covenant must be regarded as the alone means of salvation, and all who are not parties to it must necessarily be thought of as falling short of the Divine fellowship. And such is manifestly the view which our author takes. The worshippers of Old Testament times might and did continue all their life-long offering the same sacrifices year by year, yet were they never sanctified, purified, or perfected, their sins were never taken away, they died just as they lived, with all their sins about them, unholy, impure, imperfect (x. 1-4), and must therefore be supposed to have perished eternally. So matters stood at the coming of Christ, when the priests and offerings of the old covenant were taken away, that a true Priest and a true offering, one that really sanctified and perfected a people, might be established in their stead (x. 5-11). And the people who were so sanctified and perfected were just people who existed to be sanctified and perfected at the time when the offering was made (x. 19). Similarly the Apostle Paul, as we shall see more fully by-and-by, represents the whole pre-Christian world as being shut up under sin (Gal. iii. 19, 22), kept in tutelage and bondage

under the elements of the world (iv. 3, 9), till the fulness of the time came, when God sent forth His Son, born of a woman born under the law, to redeem them that were under the law (vv. 4, 5); he represents the coming of faith into the world and the coming of Christ into the world as coinciding in point of time, men previous to the coming of Christ having been shut up unto the faith that should afterwards be revealed (iii. 23); and of course with the coming and exercise of faith came the very possibility of effectual redemption and sonship (iv. 5); he represents the entire Jewish race from Moses to Jesus as having lived and died in the practice of a system of ritual religion, which had no more real saving validity than the sacrificial observances of the heathen (vv. 8-10); and, in harmony with all this, he represents Christ as having actually redeemed simply the generation contemporary with Himself—"us" (iii. 13), "we" (v. 14), "we" (v. 23), "us" (v. 24, &c.), "we" (iv. 3, &c.)—no one having received the promise of the Spirit as the instrument of renewal from Abraham to Christ, the "seed" to whom, and to those who should believe on whom, the promise was made (iii. 16, 19, 29).

Thus, there are three distinct and more or less contradictory views of the religion of Israel contained in the Epistle to the Hebrews, one which occupies chaps. iii. and iv., another which occupies the main body of the epistle, particularly chaps. viii., ix., and x., and a third which occupies chap. xi., with which may be associated chap. vi. 12-20. It remains to ask which of these three different views is accordant to history and fact, or whether any of them be so, or which is the more so. Now, it may be said at once that the writer to the Hebrews looks at the Old Testament with the eye of an orator and a systematist, not with that of an historical critic. Every one of the above views as to the state of religion in Old Testament times bears on the face of it that it is *systematic*, not historical, that it has been reached *deductively*, and not inductively. Apart from other considerations, the mere fact that they are all obviously and avowedly based on an isolated passage or passages of Scripture and not on a general survey of the teaching of Scripture as a whole,

ought to satisfy even the most prejudiced that such is the case. And when we find three such widely divergent views propounded alongside of each other within the compass of a short letter, this must be taken as conclusive evidence that neither the author nor his readers had anything beyond the most rudimentary consciousness of history. We are not therefore entitled to expect that *any* of the above views will accurately represent the historical reality: all that we can count upon is that one based on an historical interpretation of an Old Testament text will approach nearer the reality than one based on a purely fanciful interpretation of an Old Testament text.

With respect to the representation of Old Testament religion contained in chaps. iii. and iv., not much need be added to what has been already said. That it has been directly deduced from, and that its validity is entirely dependent upon, a purely fanciful interpretation of the passage from Ps. xcv., has been, I trust, sufficiently shown. And it is nothing less than absurd, in view of the historical facts which a study of the Old Testament reveals, to allege that there was no true religion in the world from the time of Moses to the time of Christ, and that no one during the whole of that period had so much as an opportunity of closing with the offer of God's grace and attaining to salvation. It is simply self-evident to the historical student that there *was* true religion, a continuous if not a copious stream of it, throughout the entire course of Old Testament history. The merest glance at the records will convince any one that such was the fact. And our author himself knows it as well as we do. The rounded, systematised view of the religion of Israel presented in these two chapters, as it has no other foundation than a manifestly fanciful interpretation of an isolated passage of Old Testament Scripture, so it has no other aim than to point a practical exhortation: as soon as that has been done, the author himself hastens to depart from it, and to adopt other widely different views. We may, therefore, well be allowed to pass it by without further remark.

The case is hardly different with respect to the second of the three views mentioned above. It, too, implies that there



was no true religion in the world from the time of Moses to the time of Christ. It implies that the religion of Israel was purely outward, fleshly, material, mechanical, and not at all inward, spiritual, moral, and real. During the whole of the pre-Christian period, a revelation of the will of God existed, but it existed merely as a dead letter, and mainly (so our author represents it) as a system of ritual ordinances utterly devoid of life and power. The author does not distinguish any more than does the Apostle Paul between the moral and the ceremonial parts of the law, for the very obvious reason that both alike were regarded by him as the expression of the will of God. Still, in the main body of the epistle, it is the ceremonial law with which he is almost exclusively occupied, since it is that which is regarded as furnishing a shadowy representation of the Gospel dispensation. This does not imply that, in the author's opinion, what we are accustomed to speak of as the moral law was living and operative in Old Testament times, while the ceremonial law was dead and in-operative: it merely implies that the moral part of the law has been allowed to fall into the background, and that "the law" (x. i.) is practically identified with what we are accustomed to speak of as the ceremonial law. Even when the writer refers to the covenant as affording a parallel to the Gospel scheme of salvation, it is not the covenant itself but the ritual ceremonies connected with it that he really has in view, for it is these latter that he brings into comparison with the spiritual realities of the Gospel. And it is certain that he regards the law in its whole extent as having been nothing more than a dead letter, a shadow, a mere form, absolutely without spirit or vitality, during the whole of the Old Testament period, that is, so long as it continued to exist.

Theological writers commonly suppose that when a typical significance is attributed to the ritual law of the Old Testament, this means that the people of Old Testament times, who practised the ritual law, discerned its typical character, and that, foreseeing the advent of Christ, and the nature of His work, they realised the presence of the Gospel in and through the ceremonies that prefigured it. According to this, the official theory of Old Testament religion, while the Old

Testament worshipper might seem to be occupied with mere outward fleshly shadows, he was really occupied with the inward spiritual verities of which the shadows were perceived to be types or prophetic symbols. The ritual observances of the law, which were in themselves of no religious validity, became, in virtue of their typical character, a direct means of Gospel grace.

“The types and shadows were a glass  
In which they saw the Saviour’s face.”

So it is said. But the writer to the Hebrews is so far from lending his countenance to an idea so peculiarly extravagant, that everything which he says is flatly opposed to it. He nowhere asserts that the ritual law was perceived to be typical by those who observed it, much less does he assert that Gospel blessings were received in and through legal observances. No, but he indicates quite plainly that had the law been perceived to be typical, it would not have been observed at all. For, with him, typical is equivalent to shadowy, lifeless, profitless, and evanescent, and, though not expressly asserted, it is clearly implied that the man who perceived the ritual observances to be of such a nature would never have continued to practise them. The principal reason why the author seeks to make out that the law is typical is that he may induce his readers to *cease from observing it*, and then, having done so, to embrace and hold fast the Gospel *in its stead*. The very soul of his argument is that the law is typical and *therefore* profitless (*ἀνωφελές*, vii. 18)—not worth observing; it did no good to any one who ever practised its injunctions (x. 1); it was impossible in the nature of things that it should do any good (v. 4). Was then the Gospel combined with it in order to give it saving validity? No such thing. It was disannulled (vii. 18), or taken away (x. 9), in order that the Gospel might be established in its stead (*id.*), a thing which could not otherwise have been done. The writer has not the remotest idea that under the Old Testament the shadow of the law was combined with the substance of the Gospel, so that the two might be found existing together, and working into each other’s hands. To him the law and the Gospel are not co-

existent but successive dispensations. The law is shadow, and nothing else. The Gospel is substance, and nothing else. What a fantastic intermixture of opposite representations would it have been first to allege that the Old Testament sacrifices were offered day after day, and year after year, without producing any effect on the worshippers beyond purifying the flesh (x. 1, *seq.*), and then to add immediately that the worshippers were actually purified in heart and conscience, though not by means of, yet on occasion of, the offering of their sacrifices! The author may have made representations respecting Old Testament religion just as directly opposed to each other as these would have been; but then he has made them in distinct sections of the epistle, and they are easily accounted for when we observe that each particular section is deduced from a different set of Old Testament quotations. The fact is, that to have asserted that the law was all along perceived to be a system of evanescent types and shadows, having no intrinsic religious validity, but deriving whatever validity they possessed from the Gospel of Jesus Christ, would have been the height of absurdity in the circumstances of the apostolic age. This was just what the apostles found it so infinitely difficult to bring home to the conviction of Jewish minds, even after Christ had made His appearance, and His work had become an accomplished fact. Paul, for example, goes so far as to say that the reason why Moses put a veil on his face after he came down from the mount was that he might conceal from the children of Israel the fact that the law was a merely typical and transitory, and not a finally valid dispensation; and he explicitly avers that "until this very day, at the reading of the old covenant, the same veil remaineth unlifted,"—that "whenever Moses is read, a veil lieth upon their heart" (2 Cor. iii. 13-15),—statements that must be held to prove that, in his judgment at anyrate, no one from Moses to Christ discovered that the law was that ephemeral and religiously indifferent or valueless affair which he himself had discovered it to be. This assertion may be considered somewhat too sweeping, in so far as it conveys the idea that no one in Old Testament times perceived that ritual was a matter of indifference, but there is no doubt that it accurately

reflects the state of the Jewish mind in the apostle's own day. The Jews, at and before the Christian era, never dreamt that their law, or any part of it, was a piece of temporary, ghostly paraphernalia, as destitute of real religious validity as a shadow is destitute of substance, least of all had they any notion that instead of being what it professed to be, a direct means of salvation, it was meant to point forward to the possibility of salvation through a *crucified Redeemer*. On the contrary, their law was to them the expression of the will of God, and as such it must have religious value and efficacy, obedience to it must be right, must constitute them righteous in the sight of God, and must be the true and only true way of salvation. Such was the opinion of Paul himself previous to his conversion, and according to his deliberate testimony, repeated time and again, it was the universal opinion among his Jewish contemporaries. "I could wish that I myself were anathema from Christ for my brethren's sake, my kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, &c. . . . Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer for them is that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own [through obeying the letter of the law without reference to the spirit of the Gospel], they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God" (Rom. ix. 3 ; x. 2, 3). How utterly inconsistent are such statements as these with the idea that the law was either regarded as having no intrinsic validity, or that it was meant to point forward to, and to receive validity from, a crucified Saviour! That the latter notion was repugnant to all the prepossessions of natural-born Israelites in the apostolic age, the whole history of primitive Christianity proves.

Nor is there any just ground to suppose that the ritual law was even remotely imagined to typify the death of Jesus Christ in the earlier periods of Israel's history any more than in the later. There is not a trace of such an idea in any part of the Old Testament—not even in Isaiah liii. 10, though that passage may have helped to originate the typical interpretation that afterwards came into vogue. When the prophet speaks of the Servant's soul being made a sin-offering, nothing more can be



held to be fairly implied than that the prophet perceived some sort of general resemblance between the death of a sacrificial victim and the death of the Servant of Jehovah, and that he felt himself justified in founding a metaphor on the basis of the resemblance. The expression is a mere isolated metaphor drawn from the language of ritual or sacrifice. Similar metaphors might be drawn from almost any department of human activity. For example, instead of saying, "When thou shalt make his soul a sin-offering, he shall see a seed," he might, following out the metaphor suggested by the word *seed*, have said, "When thou shalt make his soul a seed-corn, he shall see abundant fruit" (*cf.* John xii. 24). On the same principle he actually does say of Cyrus, "He is my *shepherd*" (xliv. 28), and, more generally, "Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker, *a potsherd among the potsherds of the earth*" (xlv. 9), and plenty of other things of a like nature. To say that because the writer uses an isolated metaphor drawn from the rites of sacrifice, with reference to the death of Jehovah's Servant, therefore, he regards sacrifice in general, and Jewish sacrifice in particular, as having been instituted and intended to typify the death of Jehovah's Servant, is neither more nor less absurd than to say that because he uses a metaphor drawn from the art of sheep-keeping, with reference to the action of Cyrus in restoring the Jewish exiles, therefore, he regards sheep-keeping in general, and Jewish sheep-keeping in particular, as having been instituted and intended to typify the action of Cyrus in restoring the Jewish exiles. It is really quite preposterous to found on an isolated metaphor a theory as to the typical nature of the Old Testament sacrificial system. The writer gives no indication that he regarded any of the Old Testament sacrifices as being typical or prophetic of anything, and of course he gives no indication that he regarded the whole of that gigantic mass of ceremonial ordinances, which makes up the ritual law of the Old Testament—including all the priests or ministers, all the different kinds of offerings, bloody and unbloody, and all the meats and drinks and divers washings, &c., &c.,—as having been expressly instituted to pre-signify the individual person and the isolated fact of the death of Jesus Christ. There is

not a vestige of evidence to show that such a notion ever dawned on the imagination of this or any other Old Testament writer. There is no more evidence to prove that the Jews regarded their sacrificial observances as typical of the death of Christ, than there is to prove that the heathen regarded, or for that matter that they still regard their sacrificial observances as typical of the death of Christ. If the ancient Israelites held the opinion that their sacrificial system had a typical reference to the death of Christ, how has that opinion left no traces in their writings? Was it handed down from generation to generation by a secret tradition? But in that case how did not that tradition descend to the Jews of the Christian era, who were so particularly zealous in preserving traditions? If it be said that some parts of the ritual law, such as the ceremony on the day of atonement, bear on the face of them an evident resemblance to the crucifixion of the Saviour of the world, it may be replied, first, that it is in the last degree questionable whether any one in Old Testament times had any idea of a crucified Saviour of the world; it is certain that such an idea was extremely repugnant to all the instincts of later Judaism; and, second, that the allegation itself, plausible though it may appear, will really be very difficult to make good. Persistent, inveterate misinterpretation of Scripture has led men to believe that there is a something—I had almost said a *ceremony*—called “the atonement,” which plays the same part in reference to the sanctification of the whole body of believers, as was played by the Mosaic atonement ceremony in reference to the sanctification of the whole people of Israel. But when we come to look narrowly, on the one hand, at the manner in which the people of Israel were abortively sanctified, and on the other hand, at the manner in which the whole body of believers are really sanctified, the resemblance between the two is found to have vanished into thin air. It would be possible to name a thousand things that have just as much resemblance to the process of human salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, as the Jewish ceremony on the day of atonement can pretend to have—things in respect to which it is not even pretended that they were instituted to be symbolic prefigurations of the

plan of salvation or of anything else. Not to travel beyond the limits of the Bible itself, any one of the parables used by our Lord to set forth the kingdom of heaven represents the process of salvation in the individual and in the race at least as closely as the sprinkling of a goat's blood on the mercy-seat by the Jewish high priest. No one, however, would dream of alleging that the process of sowing seed, for example, was expressly instituted to prefigure the process of salvation through Jesus Christ; nor could any one possibly have divined that because men sow seed as they do, therefore the world would be saved as it is and not otherwise. As little ought it to be alleged that the Mosaic ceremony of atonement was expressly instituted to prefigure the process of salvation through Jesus Christ, or that men, by observing how the people of Israel were *atoned*, could possibly have divined how the world would be saved. The manifest, exact, circumstantial resemblance between the supposed type and the so-called antitype, though much harped upon by writers on "the atonement," has no existence save in the morbid imagination of disordered "orthodox" brains. No one would have ever detected it, or even dreamt of it, had not attention been called to it by the New Testament writers. And the atonement ceremony, be it remembered, is only one chosen out of a large number, as the most favourable specimen that can be had of Gospel prefiguration in the Mosaic ceremonial law. Nothing can be more evident than that if the bloody offerings of the law had no meaning, and no religious value, save as types, the unbloody offerings of the law can have had no meaning, and no religious value, save as types. If one part of the law is to be regarded as typical, every part of the law must be regarded as typical. How strange would it be if, in a system of ritual observances so elaborate, so intimately connected, so intertwined with one another, one part were expressly intended to prefigure Gospel realities, while the other parts were meant to have no reference to Gospel realities at all! Certainly no such strange notion was for a moment thought of by the writer to the Hebrews. He regards the law as typical, as all typical, and as all equally typical. The law in its whole extent had a shadow of the

good things to come, and not the very image of the things (x. 1). In no other way could it have come into existence. On no other supposition could it be set aside in favour of the Gospel. But if the entire law be typical, what on earth or in heaven can it be supposed to typify? Does the law in its whole extent bear on the face of it that it was meant to prophesy the Gospel dispensation? Connected with the law in the work of mediation, were the angels, Moses, the priests, and high priest; and, in default of any other suitable person, Jesus has to sustain the part of all of these. Not only so, but in the absence of any sacrificial victim, Jesus has likewise to supply the place of that. And since there is nothing to answer, on the one hand, to the ceremony at the initiation of the covenant, and on the other hand, to the daily offerings of the priests (bloody and unbloody), and the annual offering of the high priest, not to speak of the multitude of other rites and observances, the death of Christ on the cross has to do duty as the Gospel antitype of all of these. Besides, as the heavenly holy place happens to be without a veil, the flesh of Christ must, in addition to all its other functions, occupy the position and discharge the function of a veil. Now, the mere fact that all this gigantic mass of heterogeneous materials, personal and impersonal, is huddled together, and put in parallelism to the individual person and the isolated fact of the crucifixion of Christ, is surely enough to prove that there is no real resemblance between the details of the ritual law and the Gospel scheme of salvation. How could any one possibly have divined that such a congeries of ritualistic machinery had no other object than to furnish a prophecy of Jesus Christ in the act of His death? That the Mosaic tabernacle is in no sense a representation of heaven; that, even if it were, the so-called offering of Jesus was not made in heaven, but upon earth; that the work of Christ, properly understood, has no more real resemblance to *any* of the ceremonies of the law than a multitude of other earthly processes that could easily be named; that of course it cannot possibly have the smallest resemblance to *all* the legal ceremonies put together; that the second tabernacle and the mass of ministers and services, rites and ceremonies, of the law are and must be entirely without



equivalents under the Gospel; and that the Gospel is not the basis of a covenant in the sense, or in anything like the sense, in which the law is the basis of a covenant—all these things have been already abundantly shown. It is, therefore, simply the height of extravagance to assume that the Israelites either did or could have discovered the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, together with all the eternal world-historical consequences of these immortal facts, in the medley of rites and observances that make up the ceremonial law. In point of fact they neither did nor could have discovered any such thing. If the Israelites must needs have perceived that their sacrifices bore a distinct typical reference to the death of Christ, then the heathen, whose ritual systems contain the germs of everything or almost everything in the Israelitish, must likewise have perceived that their sacrifices, especially their human sacrifices, bore a distinct typical reference to the death of Christ. The human sacrifices of the heathen bore and still bear a much closer analogy to the death of Christ than any sacrifices whatever. Were these human sacrifices then divinely instituted types of the death of Christ? Will any one dare to allege that the heathen foresaw the death of Christ by the help of their sacrifices, and that they received Gospel blessings in the exercise of their sacrificial rites through faith in the Coming One whom they foresaw? If not, it is impossible on reasonable grounds to allege any such thing of the Israelites.

In any case, however, it is beyond doubt that the writer to the Hebrews represents the religion of Israel to be little else than a majestic piece of mummery and masking, which served only to betray its own absolute worthlessness and inefficacy to the generation who first received the Gospel, and to "impose" on all previous generations, who practised it without perceiving it to be worthless and inefficacious. It was a religion of shadows, which is equivalent to a religion of shams, and it was "imposed until a time of reformation" (ix. 10), when the religion of truth and reality made its appearance, presumably with the view of giving the world sham religious practice, before it should be called to real religious practice, much in the same way that sham fighting is imposed upon soldiery

with the view of giving them sham military practice before they are called to real military practice. There is, however, this very essential difference between sham fighting and sham religion, that whereas the former is attended with no detriment to those who practise it, differing in this respect from real fighting, the latter must have the effect of plunging its votaries in hopeless perdition. The sham religion of Old Testament times might afford an interesting if not an amusing spectacle to the hearers of the Gospel at the Christian era, but it was serious work for those who engaged in it. The author of Hebrews has no scruple in adopting a theory of Old Testament religion which involves the ultimate destruction of the entire pre-Christian world, provided only that by so doing he can influence aright the conduct of his own readers. According to him, whatever real value belonged to the religion of Israel was a value simply and solely *in relation to his readers*; for all other men, it was not only valueless but positively pernicious. The author's view distinctly is that pre-Christian religion served as a foil to set off the excellence and ideal validity of the religion which his readers had embraced, and that it served no other useful purpose whatever. Just as the Apostle Paul regards the law dispensation in no other light than as a negative preparation for the Gospel dispensation, while he supports his view by the dead-letter theory, so the author of Hebrews regards the religion of Israel simply as a foil to commend his own religion and that of his readers, basing his representation on the typical theory. Both writers start from Old Testament texts, into which they read unhistorical, that is, purely fanciful meanings. Both have an immediately practical end in view. Both have recourse to the most flimsy and artificial reasonings in order to make good their case. And both fall into the most glaring contradiction with their own teaching in other connections.

Now, it goes without saying that such a theory of Old Testament religion has no value whatever in an historical point of view. The single circumstance that the writer makes out the religion of Old Testament times to have meaning, interest, and importance only *for his readers*, is a sufficient proof that his account of it has been directly manu-

factured for persuasive purposes. The present theory of the religion of Israel resembles both the other theories contained in the epistle in respect (1) that it is systematic, (2) that it has evidently been deduced from an isolated passage of Old Testament Scripture, and (3) that it is brought in for the purpose of grounding upon it a practical exhortation. The systematic character of the theory appears in the fact that according to it not a single individual in the whole pre-Christian period of the world's history could possibly have been saved. This implication alone is more than sufficient to stamp it as utterly incredible. As we said before, it is simply self-evident on the face of the historical records that there *was* true religion or heart piety, a continuous if not a copious stream of it, throughout the whole of the Old Testament period. And it is only the exigences of the writer's general argument that has led him to make representations implying anything else. He knows as well as we do that the religion of Israel was *not* a shadowy religion pure and simple, as the argument of chap. xi. clearly proves. But he has a direct interest in so representing it, that he may induce his readers to break with it *in the particular form which it had assumed in his own day*, which was in truth an outward, shadowy, unreal form. Let us explain.

At the Christian era religion has assumed a form which it has often assumed since, and which it has always a strong tendency to assume: it had become dead, ossified, formalised, ritualised, externalised, unspiritualised. True religion, which consists in love to God and man, or in *obedience to the moral law*, and which is prompted by the spirit of faith, had all but completely died out, buried as it was beneath a mass of outward observances. The religion of the best men in the best periods of Israel's history, the religion of the heart and conscience, the religion of the prophets and psalmists, which consisted in "doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God," had become practically extinct, and the religion of the Scribes and Pharisees, who made clean the outside of the cup and the platter, while their inward part was full of extortion and wickedness (Luke xi. 39), the religion which consisted in tithing mint and rue and every herb, while passing over judgment

and the love of God (v. 42), in devouring widows' houses and for a pretence making long prayers (Mark xii. 40), had obtained the all but exclusive ascendancy. Whatever may have been the origin of the ceremonial law, it had come in the course of centuries completely to overshadow and obliterate the moral, so that religion, instead of being the handmaid, had become the deadliest enemy of morality. Men who were living in the grossest selfishness, worldliness, rapacity, cruelty, envy, malice, pride, sensuality—men, in short, who were habitually violating every precept of the moral law—flattered themselves that they were in the best possible religious state because they went through with punctilious regularity the usual prescribed round of outward observances. There was no real faith in God, no true fear of God, no genuine heartfelt love either to God or man, and therefore there was no true *righteousness* (Matt. v. 20; xxiii. 23; Luke xi. 42), which is equivalent to saying that there was no true religion. In these circumstances, what Christ and His apostles had to do, and what all religious reformers in similar circumstances, both before and since, have had to do, has been to tear off the mask of outward formalism, and lead men back to religion of the heart. The sum of all that Christ and His apostles taught was that men should obtain through faith a new heart, which would enable them to love God and their fellow-men, and that beyond this everything was matter of absolute indifference. Hence the Gospel, when put in contrast to the law, means the spirit of religion in contrast to the outward form or letter of religion. Christ and His apostles may have had a clearer, deeper, purer insight into the moral law than any one before them, but this did not constitute the peculiarity of the Gospel, nor was it this that made the Christian era the epoch-making period that it was. It was the prodigious influx of the spirit of religion which Christ brought with Him into the world, and which He left behind Him in the world, that constituted His coming a new era in the religious history of the world. If the religion of the world had not been practically dead when Christ came, if it had not degenerated into a mere "form of godliness" without life or power, there could have been no antithesis between law and Gospel. The ground of that antithesis lies



in the fact that religion had become a lifeless, powerless, external rule—what the Apostle Paul calls “the letter”—and that Christ when He came supplied the infusion of spirit and life which made the letter powerful over the hearts and consciences of men. Religion is a combination of law and Gospel, of letter and spirit, and religion existed in the world long before the coming of Christ: but owing to the excessive prominence given to the *ceremonial* law, and the almost total obliteration, or at any rate the practical neglect, of the *moral* law, religion at the coming of Christ was identified with mere letter in separation from spirit,—which was what gave rise to the sharp distinction between law and Gospel that appears everywhere in the New Testament. In the New Testament law, even *moral* law, usually means letter without spirit, because in New Testament times it existed only in the spiritless form. And in like manner, to obtain a true antithesis, Gospel is used in the sense of spirit without letter. In other words, at the dawn of the Christian era, the letter and the spirit of religion had fallen well-nigh completely apart, and they were, in consequence, sharply distinguished from one another, and called by different names; and the task which Christ and His apostles had to accomplish was to bring the two things together again, and so to bring religion back into a healthy state.

And yet there was something more to be done than just to bring together letter and spirit by reasserting the former and introducing or supplying the latter. For the letter of the law that continued to exist subsequent to the Christian era was not identical with that which existed previously. We have said or hinted that, to all appearance, one main reason why religion before Christ had become so completely ossified was that the moral part of the law had been for centuries overshadowed and well-nigh obliterated by a ceremonial part. So much, at least, is clear: that the mass of ceremonial ordinances, which could easily be obeyed by any man without a tincture either of faith or piety, or even of common morality, had so powerful a tendency to foster and keep up dead formalism, that it was next to impossible, in the circumstances of the apostolic age, to bring men back to spirituality and truth and life, unless

this mass of external ordinances could somehow be got rid of.

By the moral part of the law, is meant that part which is summed up in the words, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself;" and the religious insight of Christ and His apostles could not but perceive that this was the only really essential part in a religious point of view, and that all else was mere lumber. The prime importance attached by Jesus Himself to the moral as distinguished from the ceremonial law, appears plainly from His answer to the scribe who questioned Him regarding the first or great commandment. "Jesus answered, The first is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God, the Lord is one: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. The second is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these [= 'On these two commandments hangeth the whole law and the prophets' (Matt. xxii. 40)]. And the scribe said unto Him, Of a truth, Master, Thou hast well said that He is one, and to love Him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is *much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices*. And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, He said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God" (Mark xii. 29-34). Similarly, the Apostle Paul writes: "He that loveth his neighbour hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not covet, and if there be any other commandment it is summed up in this word, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Rom. xiii. 8, 9). And again: "For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Gal. v. 14). Once more, the Apostle James says: "Howbeit if ye fulfil the royal law according to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well; but if ye have respect of persons, ye commit sin, being convicted by the law as transgressors. For whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet

stumble in one point, he is become guilty of all. For He that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now, if thou dost not commit adultery, but killest, thou art become a transgressor of the law. So speak ye, and so do, as those who shall be judged by the law of liberty" (ii. 8-12).

Such was the view taken of the moral law, as we are pleased to call it. But in addition to this essential moral part, there was a vast and complicated system of ceremonial ordinances which claimed, equally with the two great commandments, to have been given direct by God through the instrumentality of Moses. These ordinances had been in existence for centuries, and were accepted by every one as of Divine authority and of Mosaic origin. Historical critics of the more sober-minded and earnest class are inclining more and more to the opinion that the sacrificial and ceremonial system of the Israelitish nation was not of positive Divine institution, but of natural origin, just as much so as the sacrificial systems of the heathen; that in the earliest ages it was of a simple nature, and as nearly as possible identical, in its general character, with that which existed among the surrounding nations; that, though accepted by the God of Israel as a convenient form in which religious feeling might develop and express itself, it was at no time regarded by the best spirits of the nation as entering into the essence of true religion, or as being in itself anything more than a matter of indifference; that as soon as it became in any way corrupted by association with immoral, that is, with strictly irreligious practices, it was regarded not only as worthless, but as positively offensive; that, for many generations subsequent to Moses, sacrificial rites were performed at a variety of local sanctuaries throughout the land of Canaan, and that only when the worship connected with these had become hopelessly corrupt, through admixture and association with heathen and immoral elements, was it prohibited and finally abolished through the prevailing influence of religious reform; that as ritual worship in Israel became centralised, it also and very naturally become more elaborate, though, of course, it could not change its essential nature as the merely outward, temporary, and more or less accidental form in which the religious spirit exercised itself;

that the ceremonial system in its most fully developed written form—the form in which it appears in the middle books of the Pentateuch—did not take shape, or at any rate did not come into actual practice, till after the Babylonian exile ; and, finally, that long before the Christian era the written law had been greatly augmented by unwritten additions, and, instead of being a help, had become a positive hindrance to the progress of true religion, and was ripe for being swept out of existence, as soon as some great prophet or religious reformer should appear to tear off the mask under which ungodliness and immorality were parading themselves in the name of religion.

Such, or something like such, is the view of the best historical critics on the nature and origin of the Jewish ceremonial law. The Apostles, however, were not historical critics, but religious men. They saw, as the prophets had seen before them, that *mere* observance of the ceremonial law was to all truly religious intents on a level with heathen or nature worship (Gal. iv. 8), and that it was in no sort necessary to acceptance with God (Acts x. 34, 35). They saw, also, that besides being unsuited, highly centralised as it was, to a time when religion was to become universal, and besides being, in its now fully developed form, an oppressive “yoke of bondage” (Gal. v. 1 ; iv. 3) which “neither our fathers nor we were able to bear” (Acts xv. 10)—a mode of characterisation, by the way, which is very inexplicable, if the knowledge and practice of the ceremonial law was absolutely necessary to show men the way of salvation through a “vicarious atonement”—it had become so deeply perverted by being allowed to usurp the place of what was the only really essential part of religion, “the fearing of God and the working of righteousness” (Acts x. 35), that it must at whatever cost be set aside, or at least must no longer be imposed upon Gentile converts to the true faith as a matter of religious obligation. Believing, however, in common with all their contemporaries, that the entire system was of direct Divine institution, and of Mosaic origin, they were debarred from attacking it upon any but grounds that conserved this assumption. Jesus Himself, whatever He might know as to the origin and nature of the



system, did not feel it to be either necessary or expedient for the purposes of His mission to enter into any questions of the kind. That He should not have done so must always be a source of deep disappointment to men who go to the Bible, not for light on the problems of practical life and experience, but in order to find in it a cut-and-dried system of scholastic theology, which, however unsuited to the wants of the million, shall supply an infallible "rule of faith" to a lifeless and barren orthodoxy. But Jesus was not a scholastic divine, as scholastic divines would fain make Him out to be. He did not come to assure the world of what it was assured already—that the doctrine of plenary inspiration was sound; that the text of the Jewish Scriptures was immaculate, or nearly so; that the authorship of the different books was exactly what it professed to be; and that the ordinary traditional view of Jewish history was correct. He felt, no doubt, that He could easily accomplish "the work which the Father had given Him to do" without raising any such points. He foresaw, we may well believe, that the advance of critical inquiry would clear up the enigmas of Jewish history and Jewish literature, as soon as the world was capable of understanding them, or of turning them to any practical account. Christ and His apostles use the Old Testament history and literature for no other purpose than to illustrate and give practical point to independent living religious ideas, and *for such a purpose* the ordinary view was quite as serviceable as a critically accurate one. Accordingly, the attitude of Jesus Himself toward the ceremonial law is indefinite. Full of new ideas instinct with spirituality and power, He occupied Himself almost exclusively in communicating positive truth, and took little pains to set aside anything; leaving the leaven to spread, the mustard-seed to grow and develop, as best it might, and for the rest contenting Himself with such general statements as these:—"The Scribes and Pharisees sit on Moses' seat: *all things therefore whatsoever they bid you these do and observe, but do not ye after their works, for they say and do not*" (Matt. xxiii. 2, 3): "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye tithe mint and anise and cummin, and have left undone the weightier matters of the law, judgment, and mercy, and faith,

*but these ye ought to have done, and not to leave the other undone*" (vv. 23, 24). It is only from the general strain and tendency of His teaching, and the prominence assigned in it to what is moral above what is ceremonial, that we can gather anything as to how Jesus regarded the Mosaic ceremonial system, and the something that we do gather must be left vague, general, and undefined. The problem of the relation of Christianity to the ceremonial law, or, which is really the same thing, of the relation of Christianity to Judaism as Judaism was in the apostolic age, never took distinct shape, nor became living and practical till after Jesus had passed away, and Christianity had begun to extend itself beyond the limits of Judaism: it is, therefore, to the epistles and not to the gospels, to the disciples and not to the Master, that we must turn for definite teaching upon it.

The apostles, then, had this task to face: they had to find a method of justifying what could not but appear even to themselves as a very extraordinary and extreme step (*cf.* Acts x. 17, 45, &c.), the setting aside as religiously worthless of the entire ceremonial system, which they and all other men had hitherto regarded as absolutely necessary to salvation, and this had to be done without impugning the Divine institution and Mosaic origin of the system, in which they and all other men still continued to believe. What produced overwhelming conviction in the minds of the apostles that the ceremonial part of the law was a matter of religious indifference, and that the only really essential part in the sight of God was the moral part, was the fact that Gentile converts, who had neither been circumcised, nor had kept any ceremonial ordinance, received the Holy Ghost instantly on believing equally with the apostles themselves (Acts x. 45-47; xi. 15-18; xv. 8). So far as practice was concerned, this was a sufficient warrant for ignoring ceremonial ordinances altogether. But then the question arose, both in their own minds and in those of their converts, especially their Jewish ones, if the ceremonial law was directly imposed by God, and if strict obedience to its injunctions was required of all would-be worshippers of God at a former period, how could it now be a matter of religious indifference? How could a system of ordinances once religiously binding become no longer

religiously binding, when God was unchangeably the same? How could any ordinance directly imposed by God be a merely temporary and not a permanently obligatory ordinance? How could a specific course of action be absolutely necessary to acceptance with God (for that, and nothing less, is implied in a thing being of direct, positive, Divine institution) at one time, and wholly unnecessary at another time? These, and such-like questions, could not but suggest themselves, and press for an answer, at the hands of the apostles, and it is to answering such questions as these that some of the weightiest portions of the apostolic epistles are devoted.

Two well-marked, though not wholly independent, solutions are found in the New Testament, one peculiar to the Apostle Paul, and the other to the author of Hebrews. As a matter of course, both writers start from the assumption that the Jewish law is a unity which cannot be broken up; all the parts of which are equally Divine in their institution and equally Mosaic in their origin, all having been imposed at the same time, under the same circumstances, and with the same object in view; no part of which can be represented as being less valid, less authoritative, less obligatory, less permanent, or less final than another. The modern distinction between what is ceremonial and what is moral in the law, as between the temporary, occasional, imperfect, transitory, and the permanent, universal, ideal, and eternal, never would have occurred to Jewish minds of the first century, had not extraordinary circumstances forced it upon their attention. It traversed in the most direct manner all their preconceived ideas. They were brought to admit the possibility of it only with the utmost difficulty. And even after the reception of the Spirit by Gentile converts had compelled them to recognise it in practice, they were quite unable to justify it in theory, without having recourse to transparently unwarrantable dialectic and exegetical devices. To them it could not but appear to be nothing short of a flat contradiction, first to assert that the whole law was instituted at the same time, and under the same sanctions, and then to assert that one part of it was temporary, occasional, imperfect, transitory, while the other part was permanent, universal, ideal, and eternal. Modern

theologians may be able to accept extravagant notions of that description *ad libitum*, but not so the apostles of Christ and their contemporaries. Hence the New Testament writers make no attempt to account for the abrogation of *a part* of the so-called Mosaic law—viz., the ceremonial, as distinguished from the moral part. That was really what required to be done. But they could have done that only by denying the equal Divine authority and Mosaic origin of the part that was proved to be unessential, and that was now in consequence to be set aside. What they actually do, or endeavour by forced exegetical and dialectic expedients to do, is, first to prove that *the whole* law, moral and ceremonial, must be abrogated on the ground that it was and had always been utterly worthless for properly religious purposes, and then—but this applies chiefly, if not exclusively, to Paul—to account for *the whole* of this profitless and transitory system of law ever having been imposed by God at all. Both Paul and the author of Hebrews agree in representing the law—meaning thereby the whole Mosaic system—as a preparatory, evanescent, and, for saving purposes, abortive dispensation; they agree also in representing this abortive dispensation as being set aside in favour of the Gospel, the final ideally-valid dispensation. In both cases, too, so far as one can gather, the way is opened for this result by regarding the religious spirit, the substance of the Gospel, as being a law to itself, and as having no need even for the *moral* law, either on the one hand to curb and restrain it from what is wrong, or on the other hand to guide and direct it to what is right. With this, of course, is connected the constant tendency, which appears especially in the writings of Paul, to represent the Christian man as having reached the ideal state, in which he will really “do by nature the things contained in the law,” and will have no need for “the law (which) is made not for a righteous man but for sinners” (1 Tim. i. 9). At present, however, we are concerned only with the position occupied by the writer to the Hebrews.

That position has been already indicated with tolerable, some will perhaps think with undue, plainness. The author, on the ground of a variety of isolated, fancifully interpreted Scripture texts, tries to make out that the law communicated



through Moses had no other real object than to furnish a shadowy representation of the communication of the spirit of the Gospel through Jesus. He takes it for granted that this earlier revelation of the will of God, in contrast to the later Gospel revelation, had always been, nay, was from its very nature, the same system of dead, inefficient, unspiritual, external ordinances which it had so generally become in his own day. He will have it that the law, in its whole extent, in its moral not less than its ceremonial parts, had all along been absolutely futile, so far as concerned the salvation of those to whom it was given, and by whom its injunctions were obeyed; arguing that the first covenant bore on its very face—in the form of its tabernacle, in the time and manner of its high priest's action, in the endless repetition of the same sacrifices, in the very nature of its offerings—the evidence that it was shadowy, imperfect, transitory, profitless; though he is very far from alleging that those who practised its rites and ceremonies perceived them to be of this nature. He remembered too well that at no very distant date neither he nor any of his contemporaries had ever dreamt that they were of such a nature, otherwise they would at once have ceased to practise them, and have betaken themselves to that by which they could truly please God, and so attain to righteousness and life. Nay, he was well aware how very difficult it would be even now to convince his readers that the law was of that ghostly, good-for-nothing character which he attributes to it, and hence the elaborate care with which he endeavours to fortify all his leading positions with Scripture proof. In fact, his whole demonstration has no other object than to furnish a basis for exhorting his readers to *cease from practising the ordinances of the law*, and to *hold fast the spirit of the Gospel, which they had received, and might still retain, through faith or hope*.

As before remarked, the author's typological argument rather leads him to sink the moral part of the law in the ritual and ceremonial. He cannot be said to represent the moral law in distinction from the ceremonial as typical of the Gospel message announcing the presence of the Spirit. Neither does he follow the Apostle Paul in representing the

moral law in combination with the ceremonial as shutting men up unto the faith that should afterwards be revealed, and so acting as a tutor to lead them to Christ. Indeed, the author hardly touches on the positive point as to the *usefulness* of any part of the law : what he is bent on establishing is the negative point that every part of it is *useless*, and therefore ought to be abandoned. All that we know about the moral part of the law is that it was in no sense living and operative as a means of salvation in Old Testament times, but was simply a part of the first covenant, inseparable from the rest of the dead carnal ordinances imposed until the time of reformation, when the spirit of truth and life entered the world through Jesus Christ.

In one respect, indeed, the author's position does seem to approach that of Paul in so far as the latter represents the law as "the letter that killeth," by which he means that it is the instrument of condemnation and death; for the leading warning or dissuasive appeal that runs through the epistle rests on the assumption that "the word spoken through angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward." Yet even here there is no real parallelism. For when Paul represents the law as "the letter that killeth," he contrasts it with "the spirit that giveth life," that is, with the Gospel as the means of justification and life; whereas the practical exhortation of the author of Hebrews is based on the presupposition that law and Gospel are not opposed to each other as dead letter is opposed to life-giving spirit, but resemble each other as letter that killeth resembles letter that killeth. And this may be taken as another striking illustration, in addition to the many we have already had, of how extremely artificial is the structure of the whole epistle. The law from its very nature is a thing of two sides. It possesses negative as well as positive sanctions. It holds forth a threat in case of disobedience as well as a promise in case of obedience. And it is perfectly true that "the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward." But then this is just the very essence of the *distinction between* law and Gospel, which

occasioned and permitted of their being set over against each other as different things, and being called by different names. The Gospel, as its very name implies, is a thing of only one side. It holds forth a promise of life to those who accept it, but, properly speaking, it has no threatening of death to those who reject it, or fail to hold it fast. It is a thing of grace, and of grace only, a thing purely promissory and not at all minatory. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God sent not His Son into the world to judge the world [through His communicating the letter of the law that killeth], but that the world should be saved through Him [through His communicating the Spirit of the Gospel that giveth life]. He that believeth on Him is not judged; he that believeth not hath been already judged [*scil.* through the law], because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John iii. 16-18). These words contain in brief compass a literally accurate description of the Gospel; and they prove that however judgment and penalty may attend the rejection of it, such judgment and penalty are not, properly speaking, the work of the Gospel, but of the law that preceded the Gospel. Men are born into the world in a state of condemnation under the law, from which the Gospel seeks to deliver them, but those who refuse to believe the Gospel do not strictly incur the penalty attached to the Gospel, they simply fail to escape the penalty attached to the law, under which they already lie. So that an exhortation based on an assumed parallelism between law and Gospel in respect to penal sanctions has only the veriest semblance of a foundation to rest on. Possibly it will be said that the writer's exhortation would have a real basis, if we assume that the law is a combination of letter and spirit, while the Gospel is a combination of spirit and letter. But not to mention that here law and Gospel are no longer different things, but the same identical thing—viz., the true religion, the assumption in question, so far from being countenanced by the writer himself in the main body of the epistle, would overthrow everything, or almost everything, which the epistle contains in the way of argument.

To return. The author's general position is that the whole Mosaic law is typical of the Gospel, and therefore it must be shadowy, imperfect, evanescent, profitless, and therefore the readers of the epistle ought to renounce it for ever, and hold fast the Gospel in its stead. In other words, the writer makes use of the typical method of interpretation for the purpose of setting aside the entire Mosaic law, in the form in which it existed, and was practised in his own day—in the form, that is, of the letter that killeth—and of commending the Gospel as the corresponding living spiritual reality, intended to take its place. That his real object, however, is the setting aside of the *ceremonial* law, which was the grand stumbling-block to the reception and propagation of the Gospel, and that he is merely adopting a dialectic expedient for *this* purpose, is evident on many considerations.

In the first place, it is not true that the moral law is or can be dispensed with under the Gospel in the way that the ceremonial law can confessedly be dispensed with. The moral law is simply not abrogated, and never can be abrogated, in the sense that the ceremonial law is abrogated—viz., through obedience to its dictates having become a matter of indifference; it is, on the contrary, as imperatively obligatory, and as necessary for direction and guidance, to the Christian man as to any other. Our author, no doubt, appears to agree with the Apostle Paul in regarding the Christian spirit—"the spirit of life in Christ Jesus"—as being a law to itself, so that it can dispense with any objective rule of moral conduct; particularly when he represents it as the sum of Christian duty to "hold fast our boldness and the glorying of our hope firm unto the end" (iii. 6), to "hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end" (v. 14), to "hold fast our confession" (iv. 14), to "show the same diligence unto the fulness of the hope unto the end" (vi. 11), &c. But this is a mere dialectic device, having no practical reality. Paul himself hardly ever closes an epistle without laying down elaborately the injunctions of the moral law, and exhorting his readers to obey them. And the writer to the Hebrews does the same thing in his epistle (xii. 14-17; xiii. 1, *seq.*). Both writers are compelled, by the exigencies



of theory, to assume that the moral part of the law must be abrogated, otherwise they could not account for the abrogation of the ceremonial part. Both are likewise compelled by the exigencies of practise to repudiate their own theory, and assume that the moral part of the law is not abrogated, notwithstanding the abrogation of the ceremonial part. Indeed, to represent the letter of the moral law as in any way superseded, rendered less necessary, or less obligatory, through the introduction of the spirit of the Gospel, is to contravene in the most direct manner the plain teaching of Jesus Himself, who reaffirmed the precepts of the moral law in the most stringent form, prefacing his reaffirmation of them with the words: "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets; I came not to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished. Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whosoever shall do and teach them he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For verily I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. v. 17-20). Words sufficiently remarkable, and that almost seem to imply that Jesus did not regard the ceremonial system as being, in strictness of language, a part of the law instituted by God at all (*cf.* xv. 3). Not only does He not reaffirm any part of it in the verses that follow, or elsewhere, but as a matter of fact it was all "destroyed," and "passed away," very soon after. Anyhow, it is clear that the two great commandments "on which hangeth the whole law and the prophets" (xxii. 40) were not set aside by Jesus, but reasserted as absolutely and eternally obligatory on all who would enter the kingdom of heaven.

But, further, the theory that ignores the radical distinction between what is moral and what is ceremonial, and represents the whole law as being disannulled on account of its weakness and unprofitableness, in order that a better hope, the spirit of the Gospel, might be brought in thereupon, implies, as we

said before, that the law never was, and never could have been, a means of salvation, and this again implies that no one in Old Testament times was or could possibly be saved—a consequence that amounts to a *reductio ad absurdum* of the whole theory. A theory which carries with it the implication that there were no true servants of God during the entire course of Old Testament history, bears on the face of it the sentence of its own condemnation. The theory has the appearance of being conservative and moderate in its character, since it attempts to account for the setting aside of the ceremonial law *without impugning its Divine institution*; but, like many other conservative and moderate-looking theories, it is really far more rash and unwarrantable, and certainly far more God-dishonouring, than the theory of the critics, who allege that the ceremonial law was set aside because it was simply an outgrowth from heathenism, which never had received positive Divine sanction, which formed no proper essential part of “the law and the prophets” (Matt. v. 17), whose teaching was communicated by God, and sanctioned anew by Jesus Christ. What could be more injurious and derogatory to the character of God, than to represent Him as imposing on His chosen people a system of ordinances, such as would reduce the whole pre-Christian religion of the world to the level of a farce, intended for the benefit, if not for the amusement, of the generation contemporary with the author of Hebrews, a farce which differed from other farces only in the circumstance that those who played it were unconscious that it was farcical and not real? It is a fair inference, too, that since the theory by which the author attempts to account for the abrogation of the ceremonial law leads to consequences so absurd, the assumption on which it is based, and which it is framed to conserve, is a false assumption, and that the true reason why the ceremonial law came to be set aside is the reason suggested by the critics (*cf.* Matt. xv. 7-20).

The two foregoing views of the religion of Israel having been found to be both utterly, and about equally, unhistorical, we have now, in conclusion, to glance briefly at the view presented in chap. xi. And the first thing that has to be remarked in connection with it is that the fundamental text

from which it is avowedly deduced, is not—at least the really important clause of it is not—fancifully or flagrantly unhistorically interpreted. It is true that our author understands the word “faithfulness,” which means simply uprightness, probity, fidelity, springing from general faith in God, in the specific sense of “faith” *in Christ*, as appears from what he says about Moses sharing the reproach of Christ (xi. 26), and from other circumstances. So far, therefore, he must be allowed to have deviated from the strict historical sense. But even so, the deviation is in the form rather than in the substance. When the prophet Habakkuk says, “The righteous shall live by his faithfulness,” this is equivalent to saying, “The righteous shall live by his righteousness,” and righteousness in the Old Testament, especially in the prophets, is always thought of as the fruit of piety or faith in God. When, on the other hand, the writer to the Hebrews says, “My righteous one shall live by faith,” he means, “The righteous shall live by faith in Christ,” and he regards faith in Christ as life-giving, not in itself, but because it is the source of righteousness (xi. 4). So that the fundamental idea of the two writers is substantially though not formally and exactly the same. And this leads us to expect that the representation of Old Testament religion deduced from the prophet’s words, so interpreted and understood, will be substantially though not formally and exactly correct: which, accordingly, we shall find it to be as soon as we come to examine it.

We must premise, however, that it is by no means a part of our duty to settle the exact nature of Old Testament religion. That is a function which belongs properly to the historical critic and interpreter of the Old Testament, rather than to us, who are merely historical critics and interpreters of the New Testament. In all our remarks, therefore, we must be understood to be stating, either what is obvious on the face of the Old Testament, what is universally admitted, or what appears to be sanctioned by the best historical criticism.

Now, the following passages give us some insight into how true religion was conceived and practised by the best men of Old Testament times. “I hate, I despise your feasts, and I

delight not in your solemn assemblies ; yea, though ye offer Me burnt-offerings, with your meat offerings, I will not accept them ; neither will I regard the thank-offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from Me the noise of thy songs ; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols ; but *let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness as an unfailing stream*" (Amos v. 21-24). "Hear the word of the Lord, ye children of Israel ; for the Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, *because there is no truth, nor love, nor knowledge of God in the land* ; there is nought but swearing, and breaking faith, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery ; they commit outrages, and blood toucheth blood. . . . My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. . . . O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee ? O Judah, what shall I do unto you ? *for your love is as a morning cloud, and as the dew that goeth away*. Therefore have I hewed them by the prophets ; I have slain them by the words of My mouth ; and My justice goeth forth as the light. *For I desire love and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings*." (Hos. iv. 1, 2, 6 ; vi. 4-6). "Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom ; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah. To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto Me ? saith the Lord. I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts, and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. When ye come to appear before Me, who hath required this at your hand, to trample My courts ? Bring no more vain oblations ; incense is an abomination unto Me ; new moon and Sabbath, the calling of assemblies—I cannot away with iniquity and the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts My soul hateth ; they are a trouble unto Me ; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you ; yea, when ye make many prayers I will not hear ; your hands are full of blood. *Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to do evil, learn to do well, seek justice, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow*. Come now, and let us reason together ; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ;



*though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. . . . And I will turn My hand upon thee, and thoroughly purge away thy dross, and will take away all thy tin; and I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning; and afterward thou shalt be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city. Zion shall be redeemed by justice, and they that return of her by righteousness* [=“The righteous shall live by His faithfulness” (Hab. ii. 4)]. But the destruction of the transgressors and the sinners shall be together, and they that forsake the Lord shall be consumed.” (Isa. i. 10-20; 25-28). “Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before Him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten-thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but *to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God* (Micah vi. 6-8).

The reader cannot, of course, expect me to go on in this way, but I may be allowed to refer him for further illustration to a few more representative passages: Jer. vii. 3-10, 21-23; Isa. lv. 6, 7; lvi. 6, 7; lvii. 15-17; lviii. 4-8; Ps. xl. 6-8; l. 7-23; li. 1-17; Zech. viii. 14-17.

To make these quotations complete, we should have required to preface them with the Ten Commandments, which formed the basis of the covenant between God and the people of Israel so often referred to (1 Kings viii. 9, 21; Deut. v. 2-22; Ex. xix. 5-9; xx. 1-17); for it will be readily perceived that the Ten Words are presupposed as the standard of religious conduct in almost all the above passages. Taken as a whole, and with the addition of the Ten Words, the passages cited may be regarded as affording a very fair specimen of the views entertained by the most eminent men of Old Testament times on the fundamentals of religious faith and practice. And they

appear, when duly considered, to warrant the following conclusions :—

(1.) That the essence of true religion lies in justice, righteousness, truth, faithfulness, knowledge of God, likeness to God, love to God and man, fellowship with God, fear of God, humility, purity of heart and life, holiness, obedience to God's word or will, keeping God's covenant (the Ten Commandments), all these having their source in, and being directly dependent upon, faith in God. In one word, therefore, true religion consists in obedience to the moral law—to the two great commandments on which hangeth the whole law and the prophets—through faith in God.

(2.) That worship by sacrifice forms no part of the essence of religion, and is in no sort necessary to salvation, or to acceptance with God, though the neglect of it may, under certain circumstances, be considered culpable, as being a token of religious indifference ; just as, on the other hand, the officious observance of it may become an abomination to God, when it is put forward as a substitute for religion itself. In short, sacrifice, like prayer, praise, fasting, Sabbath-keeping, almsgiving, tithe-paying, &c., is simply an outward religious exercise, a form of religious worship, comparable in every respect to the forms of religious worship that still survive in the Christian Church, which may, when rightly used—used, that is, as a help to the development of the religious affections and the strengthening of the religious spirit—be a real efficient means of grace to the worshipper, and of glory to God who is worshipped, though they possess in and of themselves no proper religious value, and though they are not obligatory in any other than the general sense that everything which tends to strengthen and develop religious life is obligatory.

(3.) That forgiveness of sins is absolute and unconditional on the part of God, and on the part of the sinner is conditioned solely by repentance, contrition of heart, conversion or turning from sin to God, renewal of heart or spirit, purification, sanctification. Sacrifice in particular is not in the least essential to forgiveness, as appears very plainly from the language of Ps. li., which is occupied with the idea of forgiveness and with nothing else. Sacrifice to be acceptable must be offered in a repentant

contrite frame of mind, and a person in such a frame of mind will be forgiven by God whether his feelings are embodied in corresponding ritual actions or not.

(4.) That suffering undergone by God's people is viewed as punishment inflicted by God on account of sin, is, in that regard, a manifestation of the Divine justice, and is intended besides to work repentance, contrition, conversion from sin to God.

(5.) That, in like manner, prosperity enjoyed by God's people is viewed as the reward of obedience, and so serves to manifest the Divine justice, and that, when it follows suffering, it is a token that God has forgiven His people's sin.

It is evident how completely this view of the nature of true religion agrees with the teaching of Jesus as we find it in the Sermon on the Mount, and elsewhere. According to Jesus also:—(1) True religion consists in righteousness, obedience to the moral law, love to God and man, likeness to God, truthfulness or sincerity, purity of heart and life, holiness, humility, charity, &c., exercised in and through faith in God (Matt. v. 17-20; xxii. 37-40; v. 43-48; vi. 2, *seq.*; v. 3-9; xix. 17-21; Luke ix. 46-48, &c.). (2) Religious observances, such as sacrifice, prayer, praise, fasting, Sabbath-keeping, almsgiving, tithe-paying, &c., are not of the essence of true religion, but may be used as helps to the development of religious life, and as such "ought to be done" when convenient (Matt. xxiii. 3, 23); although, on the other hand, as soon as they become hindrances to the development of religious life, by usurping the place or obstructing the exercise of moral obedience, they are to be traversed and broken through, as being an abomination in the sight of God (Matt. xii. 7, 12, *seq.*; ix. 13; xv. 1-20; Luke xiii. 15, *seq.*; vi. 9, *seq.*; Matt. vi. 1, 2, 5, 16; Mark xii. 40). (3) Forgiveness of sins is absolute and unconditional on the part of God, and on the part of the sinner is conditioned solely by repentance, contrition of heart, righteousness, love, a forgiving disposition, &c. (Matt. vi. 14; Luke xviii. 13; vii. 47; xv. 20, 21; Matt. xviii. 35, &c.). Sacrifice has no essential connection with forgiveness, but acceptable sacrifice can only be offered by a person in a loving, forgiving frame of mind (Matt. v. 23). (4) In one point, and

one only, does the teaching of Jesus appear to differ materially from that of the law, the prophets, and the psalms, and even that point is one of development rather than of difference. By the Old Testament writers the issues of God's moral government are thought of as strictly confined to the present life. When God punishes His people, or His enemies, He does so in the present world, by the sufferings, trials, reverses (personal and political) which He inflicts upon them. And, in like manner, when God rewards His people, He does so in the present world, by giving them to enjoy peace, prosperity, and plenty in their own land, which, when taken along with its accessories, is the sum of the reward attached to the keeping of the covenant. All the expostulations, warnings, threats, and promises of the prophets are based on the presupposition that God is the righteous Governor of the world, and that, consequently, righteousness must ultimately triumph and iniquity be confounded *in the present life*, if not of the individual, at least of the nation or people. This assumption was indeed discovered even by the later Old Testament writers themselves to be altogether too sweeping; and hence the difficulties which were felt to be involved in the observed order of things, and the doubts and perplexities thence arising, which find expression and are discussed in some of the psalms, in the Book of Job, and in Ecclesiastes. Jesus, on the other hand, without disputing the fact that the present world is under the moral government of God, taught that the issues of God's moral government, in the way of reward and punishment, are to be sought *mainly* in the world to come (Matt. v. 12; xxv., *passim*; Luke xvi. 19-31, &c.). The punishment of God's own people, so far as they are punished, is indeed still confined to the present life. But even here there is a difference. For while the believer may and ought to regard his sufferings as in general the effect of sin and the punishment of it, he is neither bound nor entitled to construe particular calamities as the manifestations of the Divine anger on account of particular sins, in the way that Old Testament saints were in the habit of doing (Luke xiii. 1-9; John ix. 1-3). As regards the reward of the godly and the punishment of the ungodly, both these are thought of as mainly



though not exclusively reserved for the time of reckoning that shall set in at the final judgment.

So much for the general correspondence between true religion as expounded and practised by the most eminent men of Old Testament times, and true religion as expounded and practised by Jesus Christ. Our chief concern, however, is with the view of Old Testament religion presented in Hebrews xi., and particularly with its relation to what we have found reason to think is the proper historical view. We have already indicated that the author of Hebrews understands the word "faithfulness," used by the prophet Habakkuk, in the specific sense of *faith in Christ*, and that he attributes faith in Christ to all, or at anyrate to some, of the righteous men of Old Testament times. Now, there can be no doubt that, in doing this, the author was simply attributing to Old Testament saints *his own* state of mind: because he had attained to righteousness and life through faith in Christ, therefore he assumes that all Old Testament saints must have attained to righteousness and life through the same means. The consequence, however, does not follow, natural though it may have been for him to draw it. For after the advent and death of Christ, true religion assumed a somewhat more definite and specialised form than that which it had previously. *Before* the advent of Christ, the religious spirit drew its inspiration direct from God himself, in accordance with the command, "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else" (Isa. xlv. 22). Faith rested simply on Jehovah, the God of Israel, who alone could help and reward them that sought after Him. There was "one God," but there was not "one Mediator also between God and men, Himself man, Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. ii. 5)—at least there was no consciousness of such a Mediator. Jehovah Himself was everything to His people—Father (Isa. lxiii. 16; lxiv. 8), Bridegroom (lxii. 4), Husband (liv. 5), Redeemer (*id.*), Saviour (xlv. 15), Teacher (xlviii. 17), and, in particular, the object of faith (l. 10), and the Giver of the Spirit (lix. 21; lxiii. 11, &c.). *After* the advent of Christ, the religious spirit drew its inspiration from God, as manifested and made known in Jesus Christ, in accordance with the command,

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31). The apostles, having found Christ to be everything to them in the way of communicating spiritual life, recommended all men to look to Him and be saved, just as the prophets at a former period, having found Jehovah to be everything to them in the way of communicating spiritual life, recommended all men to look to Him and be saved. Henceforth religious life became specifically life in Christ, religious faith became specifically faith in Christ, and the religious spirit became specifically the Spirit of Christ. Henceforth men had not only abstract moral precepts to point them Godward, together with the imperfect embodiment of these precepts in the lives of eminent patriarchs, judges, kings, and prophets, but they had abstract moral precepts, together with the ideally perfect embodiment of these precepts in the life of the Son of God. Henceforth men had not only God for a Father, but they had Christ for an elder brother, a forerunner, and (in the conscious sense) a mediator. So that our author can say, "Let us also . . . run with patience the race set before us, looking [for an example] to Jesus, the leader and perfecter of faith" (xii. 1, 2). "Us also [as well as the Old Testament worthies]," says the author. But, in point of fact, the Old Testament saints did not, and could not, look for an example to Jesus. Nor could they understand that they were sharing the reproach of Christ, enduring the same sufferings that He should one day endure. When the author of Hebrews attributes such a state of mind to them, he is merely projecting his own experiences and ideas back into the history of the Old Testament period. So far, therefore, his view of Old Testament religion must be regarded as unhistorical.

Again, when the writer says of Abraham that "he looked for the city which hath the foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (v. 10), and of the Old Testament saints generally, that they "all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth, . . . that they desired a better country, that is, an heavenly" (vv. 13-16), he is plainly attributing to them that distinct knowledge of the future life which he

himself possessed, but which they did not possess. Neither Abraham, nor any of his descendants, at least until we come down to a very late period—down say to the period and the parties referred to, when it is said that “others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection” (v. 35)—had anything like a clear, definite, or fixed belief in a future state of existence. In fact, such a belief had not attained to the universal prevalence which our author assumes (v. 13) even at the time of Christ’s advent, for a large and influential sect of the Jews still maintained that there was no resurrection of the dead (Matt. xxii. 23). It is clear, therefore, that the author is representing Old Testament religion as being not only substantially identical with New Testament religion, which it actually was, but formally and exactly identical, which it was not; in other words, he is projecting the form which religious faith and religious life had assumed in his own day, in consequence mainly of the advent of Christ, back to the beginning of the Old Testament period, a thing which is constantly done by one and all of the New Testament writers.

But there is another and more general way in which the author departs from the strict historical view of the religion of Israel. Speaking of Abraham’s descendants, he alleges that “these *all* died in faith,” &c. (v. 13), and speaking of Israel under Moses, and under Joshua, he says that “*by faith* they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land, which the Egyptians assaying to do were swallowed up,” and that “*by faith* the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been compassed about for seven days” (vv. 29, 30); whilst he closes the whole chapter with the statement that “these *all*, having had witness borne to them through their faith, received not the promise, &c.” (v. 39). It appears certain, therefore, that he represents the outward form, or (as the Apostle Paul would say) the letter, of Israel’s religion as being not merely united to the Spirit of Christ’s religion, but united *in its whole extent*; in other words, he teaches, in express opposition to the Apostle Paul, that they *are* all Israel which are of Israel, and that because they are the seed of Abraham they *are* all children (Rom. ix. 6, 7)—that he *is* a Jew which is

one outwardly, and that circumcision of the flesh, if not identical with, is at least invariably accompanied by, circumcision of the heart or spirit (ii. 28, 29). The religion of Israel had an outward form comparable in all essential respects to the outward form of the Church of Christ. And the present writer, pursuing his *à priori* deduction from the words of Habakkuk, represents this outward form as pervaded throughout with the Spirit of Christ, much in the same way that modern high churchmen, following out their theory of the absolute efficacy of the sacraments when duly administered, represent the visible Church of Christ as identical with the invisible. Manifestly, however, the Apostle Paul's view of the matter is that which accords with history and fact. The merest glance at the records, or even at the quotations from the prophets adduced above, will satisfy any one that at no period of Israel's history was there more than what Isaiah speaks of as "a very small remnant" (i. 9) who truly loved and served Jehovah, and held fast by His covenant. It was with the Old Testament Church as it is with the New Testament Church, the mass of its adherents showed only too plainly by their lives that they were members of God's kingdom in name, but not in reality, that instead of being just, loving, humble, pure, as the terms of the covenant required that they should be, they were selfish, worldly, impure, proud, grasping, tyrannical, cruel. Again, therefore, the author's systematised representation of the religion of pre-Christian times must be regarded as palpably unhistorical.

Still, when these abatements are made, I know not that any others require to be made. There is no doubt whatever that the author's fundamental idea is correct—viz., that righteous men in Old Testament times were saved by their righteousness exactly in the same way as righteous men in New Testament times are saved by their righteousness. There is as little doubt that when he represents Abel's offering as being accepted through faith (v. 4), and the passover as being kept through faith (v. 28), this correctly describes the condition on which Old Testament rites and ceremonies were really of any benefit to the worshipper, or redounded in any degree to the glory of God,—always assuming of course



that faith is simply faith in God, and not faith *in Christ*, and that Old Testament sacrifices and ceremonies were never understood to have any reference whatever to the future advent of a personal Saviour. The idea which still prevails in official modern theology, that there was no faith in Old Testament times that was not faith *in Christ*, that there was no Gospel in Old Testament times which was not the Gospel of *Christ*, that there was no salvation in Old Testament times which was not salvation consciously derived *from Christ*, that the sum and substance of all that is taught in the law, the prophets, and the psalms is simply and only *Christ, Christ, Christ*, in short, that the whole Old Testament has no meaning except as a prophecy of *Christ*,—this idea, though true enough to New Testament representations, is quite opposed to history and fact. The faith of the *New Testament writers* was faith in Christ, the Gospel of the *New Testament writers* was the Gospel of Christ, the salvation of the *New Testament writers* was salvation consciously derived from Christ, for the *New Testament writers* the law, the prophets, and the psalms had no meaning and no value except as a prophecy of Christ; and they assumed, and no doubt believed, that, as it was with them, so it must have been with religious men from the beginning of the world. But this assumption was simply contrary to fact, and there is no need to say anything more about it. The Old Testament, instead of being as the New Testament writers represent it to be, entirely made up of direct Messianic prophecy, might more correctly be said not to contain *a single particle* of direct Messianic prophecy within its compass. It has, I hope, been sufficiently proved, with respect to the New Testament in general, and to the present epistle in particular, that not merely the view taken of individual texts and passages, but the whole conception of Old Testament religion, as well as of the records of Old Testament religion, is nothing, if it be not the systematised product of *a priori* dogmatic reflection and deduction, the results of which are for the most part diametrically opposed to the plain facts of the case.

## CHAPTER IX.

## THE LAW AND THE PROMISE, "THE ATONEMENT," ETC.

HAVING finished what we have to say on the Epistle to the Hebrews, we now return to the Apostle Paul. We have already touched on his view of Old Testament religion, and its relation to New Testament religion, but it is necessary that we examine it somewhat more carefully; which we shall endeavour to do within as narrow limits as possible.

The following paragraph contains the main outlines of the apostle's *scheme*. "Brethren, I speak after the manner of men: though it be but a man's covenant, yet, when it hath been confirmed, no one maketh it void or addeth thereto. Now to Abraham were the promises spoken, and to his seed. He saith not, and to seeds, as of many, but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ. Now this I say, a covenant confirmed beforehand by God, the law, which came four hundred and thirty years after, doth not disannul, so as to make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no more of promise; but God hath granted it to Abraham by promise. What then is the law? It was added to further transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise hath been made, having been ordained through angels in the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one. Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid; for if there had been a law given which could make alive, verily righteousness would have been of the law. Howbeit the Scripture [=the law (*cf.* iv. 21, 30)] hath shut up all things under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe" (Gal. iii. 15-22).

As already observed, the apostle's aim is to induce his readers, on the one hand, to give up seeking salvation through the mechanical observance of the *ceremonial* law, by their own natural efforts; on the other hand, to continue seeking salvation through the spiritual observance of the *moral* law, by faith in Jesus Christ. This comes out plainly in, for example, the verses that follow: "Howbeit at that time, not knowing God, ye were in bondage to them which by nature are no gods; but now that ye have come to know God, or rather to be known of God, how turn ye back again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire to be in bondage over again? *Ye observe days and months and seasons and years.* I am afraid of you; lest by any means I have bestowed labour upon you in vain" (iv. 8-11). The "weak and beggarly elements," elsewhere spoken of as "the elements of the [present earthly] world" (v. 3; Col. ii. 20) refer to the "carnal ordinances imposed until a time of reformation (Heb. ix. 10)—ordinances touching "gifts and sacrifices" (v. 9), "meats and drinks and divers washings" (v. 10), "days and months and seasons and years" (Gal. iv. 10)—ordinances by which one might be judged "in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast-day, or a new moon, or a Sabbath day" (Col. ii. 16);—they refer, in short, to the whole ceremonial system, considered as forming part of the present earthly sphere of existence, and as adapted for men in their fleshly natural state, in which they too form part of the same sphere of existence. The practice of that system, the apostle implies, or rather expressly asserts, is identical in nature with heathen worship. When the Galatians observed the days and months and seasons and years prescribed by the Mosaic ceremonial law, they did what had been done from of old, not only by the Israelites, but by their heathen neighbours as well—paid that homage which custom assigned to heathen deities on the part of their votaries, but which the true God could not accept as in itself of any value. If they should again fall back into the practice of such observances, they would again be serving, not the true God, but heathen gods—no gods at all. The Galatians imagined that when they observed the ceremonial law, they were doing service to the true God in His own

prescribed way, but this was an imagination, nothing more. They were really ignorant of the true God. They were doing what He had never required at their hand, and what He could not accept. They were merely observing heathenish customs and practices. Such being the case, they ought to cease for ever from observing the ceremonial law, and hold fast the beginning of their faith in Christ firm unto the end.

This is the apostle's most general argument. And the natural, nay, the necessary, complement to such an argument would seem to be that as the ordinances of the ceremonial law were heathenish in their nature, so they were heathenish in their origin also, and *therefore* ought to be abandoned. Jesus Himself had almost gone as far as this. When He made all "meats and drinks" clean (Mark vii. 19), when He denounced the "divers washings" of the Pharisaic ceremonial code—including by implication those of the so-called Mosaic ceremonial code—as the "precepts of men," handed down *by tradition*, in contrast to "the commandment of God" (vv. 1-8), when He condemned the offering of "gifts and sacrifices" (v. 11; Matt. xii. 7), and the observance of "days" (v. 1), in all cases where they in any way interfered with the keeping of "the commandment of God,"—*i.e.*, the *moral* law (Mark vii. 9, 10) as summed up in "mercy" or love, the doing of good (Matt. xii. 7, 12)—condemned them as things which God did not desire (*id.*), things by which His Word was made void *through tradition* (Mark vii. 13)—when He limited the things that defile a man to those that proceed from within, out of the heart, such as "evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, covetings, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, railing, pride, foolishness" (vv. 21, 22)—in all this, it is hardly too much to say that He enunciated principles leading by necessary implication to the conclusion that the moral law, and it alone, was the Word or commandment of God, and that the ceremonial law, in its whole extent, was made up of traditional precepts of human origin, the observance of which might be tolerated indeed, and even commended, as long as it tended to promote the exercise of obedience to the moral law, although, on the other hand, it must be



condemned and discontinued as soon as it tended to impede such exercise. But to say that the ceremonial system of the Jews was made up of traditional precepts of human origin, is equivalent to saying that it was identical, both in nature and origin, with the ceremonial systems of the heathen. This much at least is obvious to every reader, that in the earliest Christian period the entire Jewish ceremonial law—that part of it which was avowedly of Mosaic origin, equally with that part which was confessedly of post-Mosaic origin—had become, in the judgment of the leading apostles, a positive hindrance to the progress of religious truth and life, possessed of no proper religious authority, and no binding religious validity, and which ought no longer to be represented and imposed as obligatory, in the sense that the moral law is obligatory. The Apostle Paul, in particular, strenuously contended that neither circumcision (Gal. vi. 15), nor the Sabbath, nor any part of the ceremonial system, ought to be regarded as anything more than a matter of pure and perfect indifference; that men ought to have absolute liberty in the way either of keeping or abstaining from keeping all such commandments; that no man ought to be adversely judged whatever he might do or forbear to do “in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast-day, or a new moon, or a Sabbath day” (Col. ii. 16); that ceremonial ordinances, whether professedly Mosaic or not, were “elements of the world” to which religious men ought not to be subjected, being all of a piece with the following, “Handle not, nor taste, nor touch (all which things are to perish with the using), *after the precepts and doctrines of men*; which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will-worship and humility and severity to the body,” but are of no real religious value (Col. ii. 20-22).

Still, though the Apostle Paul clearly perceived and taught that the entire ceremonial law, if not made up of “the precepts and doctrines of men,” was at least of the same nature with “the precepts and doctrines of men,” having not a whit more religious value or efficacy, he was not at liberty to set it aside upon such a ground. For the apostle himself and all his contemporaries accepted the greatest part of the current ceremonial system as being what it professed to be, of Mosaic

origin and of *Divine authority*. If Paul were to dispute the soundness of this common opinion, he must needs be prepared to adduce reasons, adequate to satisfy not only himself but his readers as well, a thing which he was by no means in a position to do. Hence he was obliged to have recourse to a variety of dialectic expedients for the purpose of making out what nevertheless could not be made out—viz., that the law, taken as a whole, never had been, and never was intended to be, a means of salvation, and that the believer in Christ was no longer subject to any part of it, moral or ceremonial. The principal of these expedients is contained in the paragraph cited above.

The apostle starts from the assumption that the law always had been, nay, that it was from its very nature, what it had so generally become in his own day, and what he in particular had experienced it to be, a dead, spiritless, powerless letter, utterly inefficient as a means of conferring righteousness and life. He goes so far as to claim for this assumption that it is self-evident. "Now, that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident; for the righteous shall live by faith; and *the law is not of faith*, but he that doeth them [apart from faith] shall live in them" (iii. 11, 12). When the prophet Habakkuk said, "The righteous shall live by faith"—or rather "by his faithfulness"—he meant that the man who obeyed the moral law *through faith in God* would live by his obedience. When God said through Moses, "He that doeth them [the commandments of God] shall live in them," the Apostle Paul affirms that he meant that the man who obeyed the moral law, *apart from faith in God*, would live by his obedience. In other words, when God revealed His will through Moses and commanded Israel to obey it, He made it an express condition that the obedience should be rendered without a tincture of faith or piety! The assumption is clearly out of the question. The apostle, however, is bound to make it, if an antithesis is to be established between law and Gospel as between dead letter and living spirit, and unless the law can be shown to be a dead letter, absolutely devoid of saving efficacy, it is impossible to insist on its being set aside, whilst if the law as a whole cannot be set aside, no part

of it (*e.g.*, the ceremonial part) can be set aside, seeing that, *ex hypothesi*, it is all of equal Divine authority.

The apostle finds a still more potent instrument for his purpose in the covenant made by God with Abraham. The passage of Genesis, to which reference is made, is in these terms :—"The Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be thou perfect; and I will make My covenant between Me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying, As for Me, behold My covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham, for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish My covenant between Me and thee, and thy seed after thee, throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land of thy sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God;" (xvii. 1-8). The historical meaning of these verses is so obvious that it may justly be said to be absolutely above dispute. They describe the terms, parties, and conditions of a covenant so nearly identical with the Sinaitic, that the two are hardly to be distinguished from one another. In fact, if we regard the Sinaitic covenant as being acquiesced in by all the generations of Israel subsequent to the exodus, the two covenants are not two at all, but one and the same. The parties to both are the same parties—God on the one side, the descendants of Abraham on the other; only, in the case of the Abrahamic covenant all Abraham's descendants are included together with Abraham himself; in the case of the Mosaic covenant, as a matter of abstract necessity, simply the descendants subsequent to the exodus from Egypt. The conditions to both are likewise the same—on the side of Abraham and his descendants, perfect obedience to the revealed will of God; on the side of God, the promise of the land of Canaan for an everlasting inheritance, along with His favour, fellowship, and

protection. In both cases the parties to the covenant receive the seal of circumcision, and in both cases faith or piety is evidently presupposed as the source of obedience. In short, the two covenants could not more completely accord with one another, even if the one were a reflection backward from the other in the shape of a *vaticinium post eventum*, which, of course, many hold it to be. That which the passage of Genesis describes prophetically is the same identical thing with that which the passage of Exodus describes historically. One difference, indeed, there is—viz., that whereas the will of God revealed to Abraham was practically co-extensive with the moral law, including, besides, only the rite of circumcision, the will of God revealed to Moses included, in the form assigned to it by tradition, the moral law, the rite of circumcision, and, in addition, a gigantic mass of ritual ordinances, dead mechanical obedience to which had usurped the place and become identified with the sum of religion in the apostolic age. But this difference, though one of great importance from the apostle's point of view, whose real object is the setting aside of the mass of ritual ordinances, does not touch the fundamental character of the two transactions, which are, in all essential respects, absolutely the same.

The apostle, however, assumes that the two covenants, so far from being identical, are totally distinct, nay, radically opposed to one another. According to him, the Abrahamic covenant is related to the Sinaitic, not as prophecy is related to history, but as Gospel is related to law, as spirit is related to letter, as the living Christianity of the apostolic age is related to the dead Judaism of the apostolic age. The promise attached to both covenants is indeed the same, the land of Canaan, together with the fellowship of God. But then, in the apostle's view, the fulfilment of the promise is conditioned in the case of the Abrahamic covenant by obedience *through faith in God*, but in the case of the Sinaitic, by obedience *apart from faith in God*. This is what the apostle means when he says, "If the inheritance is of the law, it is no more of promise; but God hath granted it to Abraham by promise" (v. 18). The word "promise" is here used in a pregnant sense to specify, not the bare offer of the inheritance on condition of obedience—an



offer which the letter of the law itself conveyed—but along with that the offer to faith of the Spirit of the Gospel, by whose help obedience should be rendered (v. 14). The “promise” in this deeper sense was not, the apostle would have us believe, attached to the law given by Moses; for that would imply that the law was the same identical thing with the Gospel, and that the Sinaitic covenant was the Abrahamic under another name—a conclusion which must above all things be avoided. If the covenant made through Moses were held to have been accompanied by the tacit promise of the Spirit to faith, as was the case, by the apostle’s own admission, with the covenant made through Abraham, then the law must be supposed to have been effectual as a means of salvation in the same way that the Gospel is so, and there would thus be no room for arguing that the former should be set aside in favour of the latter, since both would be equally valuable. What, therefore, the apostle assumes and alleges is, that the covenant made through Moses had always been, and could not but be, a dead letter, being fettered by the impossible condition that obedience should be rendered *apart from faith*, and from the Divine Spirit which faith appropriates—an hypothesis on which it was quite open to argue that it should be set aside in favour of the covenant made through Abraham, which contained the promise of the Divine Spirit as the source and principle of obedience *through faith*. And as the covenant made through Abraham is regarded as freed entirely from ceremonial ordinances—freed even from the ordinance of circumcision which really attached to it—freed also from the moral law so far as then revealed, and reduced to the bare promise of the Spirit, which is thought of as being a law to itself—the apostle’s ultimate aim, *the setting aside of the ceremonial law* is thus fully, if somewhat violently, attained.

Moreover, when a sharp antithesis has been drawn between the Abrahamic promise and the Mosaic law as covenants radically different in kind, the apostle can found an argument on the fact that the promise was given 430 years before the law, to prove that the law could never have been intended as an effectual means of salvation, and, consequently, that his readers need not cling to it as if it were. For if the law had been

intended to be anything more than a dead letter, it must have been intended to supersede the promise. But the analogy of human covenants proves *à fortiori* that a covenant which had once been ratified by God could neither be disannulled nor have anything added to it. *Ergo* the law could not have been intended as an effectual means of salvation ; that is, the apostle's readers may give it up as worthless for saving purposes. It may, perhaps, strike the reader that the human analogy, which the apostle invokes for the purpose of bringing out his point, proves somewhat more than his argument requires. For, granting that a covenant between two parties cannot be set aside without the consent of both, will not this principle forbid the setting aside of the Mosaic law, or any part of it, just as necessarily as the Abrahamic promise? The apostle can produce no evidence to show that both the parties to the Sinaitic covenant are willing that it should be set aside. We have even the Master's word for it that God will never consent to the setting aside of "one jot or one tittle" of what is, properly speaking, the law (Matt. v. 18). In these circumstances, the apostle's argument, if it prove anything, will prove that at least the *moral part* of the Sinaitic covenant cannot be set aside ; while, if the assumption be correct that the ceremonial part of the law is of equal Divine authority with the moral, it will prove that *no part whatever* of the Sinaitic covenant can be set aside. This difficulty, however, is not felt by the apostle. He insists that the Abrahamic covenant is different in nature from the Sinaitic, that the former cannot have been disannulled by the establishment of the latter, and that as the promise is in every way preferable the law ought to be abandoned as worthless.

But the apostle goes further than this. He assumes not only that the Abrahamic covenant was radically different in nature from the Sinaitic, but also that it was made with different persons. The Sinaitic covenant was made with the children of Israel, the seed of Abraham. But the apostle asserts, in defiance of the plain meaning of the word as defined conclusively by the context, in defiance also of the meaning which he himself has put upon it elsewhere (Rom. iv. 16, *seq.*), that "seed" in the above quotation is to be understood, not

collectively of the "many nations" of Abraham's descendants, but individually of Jesus Christ. When God preached the Gospel and promised to bestow His Spirit first upon Abraham and then upon Abraham's seed, his meaning, if we are to trust the apostle, was that the gift of the Spirit would be offered and imparted first to Abraham and then to *Christ*. This implies that while Abraham attained to righteousness and life through faith in God, and while Christ and those who believe on Christ attain to righteousness and life by the same means, no one during the intervening period had so much as an opportunity of becoming true servants of God through exercising faith and receiving thereby the promise of the Spirit. In other words, during the whole of the Old Testament period from Abraham to Christ true religion was literally extinct. The world, not excluding the chosen people of God, was in a state of absolute spiritual death. No Gospel was preached. No Spirit was offered. No faith was or could be exercised. No one entered heaven. No one even had an opportunity of doing so.

That this is what the apostle means is quite evident, for he proceeds in conformity with the supposition to answer the question, which could not but present itself, "What then is the law?" If the Abrahamic covenant were conceived to have been in force during the whole of the Old Testament period, it would be quite impossible to account for the introduction of the dissimilar and rival Sinaitic covenant. Theologians commonly assume and assert that the two covenants might and did exist alongside of each other during the whole of the Old Testament period. And, of course, they likewise assume and assert that they must continue to exist alongside of each other during the whole of the New Testament period. But the apostle clearly holds the reverse. His statement is, "It [the law] was added to promote transgressions, *till the seed should come to whom the promise hath been made,*" when it ought to be set aside. Such a statement must be held to imply, on the one hand, that the law existed as a practical reality *before* the promise had become a practical reality, that is, during the pre-Christian period; and, on the other hand, that the law cannot continue to exist as a practical reality

*after* the promise has become a practical reality, that is, during the Christian or post-Christian period. The latter point is strenuously insisted on by the apostle, as that which his whole argument aims at establishing: "Yea, I testify again to every man that receiveth circumcision, that he is a debtor to do the whole law; ye are severed from Christ, ye who would be justified by the law; ye are fallen away from grace" (v. 3, 4). Nothing could show more clearly than do these words that the apostle desires his readers to cease from observing the ordinances of the law, because the promise has come to take their place. The law was intended only for the Old Testament period, when faith had not yet come, and the promised Spirit had not yet been given. It was never more, and was never meant to be more, than a dead letter. Its aim was not to confer righteousness and life, but rather to promote sin and death, and so to bring the world into a fitting state for receiving the Spirit of life through faith as soon as He should be offered. According to Paul, the law promotes transgressions by providing a clear standard of conduct, and so imparting that distinct consciousness of sin, without which there is no guilt (Rom. iii. 20; iv. 15; v. 13; vii. 7, *seq.*). But this is a purely negative process so far as the conferring of righteousness is concerned. And men who experience this process, *and nothing more*, cannot possibly be saved. They must rather be in a worse case than if the law had never been communicated to them, agreeably to the statement of Jesus, "If I had not come and spoken to them they had not had sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin" (John xv. 22). As bearing on the apostle's readers, the introduction of the law might serve an useful, positive purpose in preparing the way for the reception of the Gospel, but as bearing on all previous generations, who never heard, and therefore could not receive the Gospel, the introduction of the law could have no other purpose and no other effect than a purely negative one. And this is distinctly recognised by the apostle himself. In general, the purpose and effect of the law was to "shut up all things under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe" (Gal. iii. 22). In particular, "Before faith came, *we* [the apostle and his



Christian contemporaries] were kept in ward under the law, shut up unto the faith that should afterwards be revealed; so that the law hath been our tutor to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith is come, we are no longer under a tutor" (vv. 23, 24). In other words, in the case of the generation who received the law for the last time, and the Gospel for the first time, the law might be said to work into the hands of the Gospel, by producing in men's minds a consciousness of sin favourable to its reception. So far, therefore, the law, dead letter though it was, performed a real service. But the apostle does not allege that this service was rendered in the case of any previous generation. What he says plainly implies the opposite. *Theologians* hold and teach that, in pre-Christian not less than in post-Christian times, the law wrought into the hands of the Gospel, shutting men up to faith in Christ, which they were enabled to exercise through the help of a copious stream of direct Messianic prophecy; but in this, as in many other instances, theologians, while professedly accepting, are chargeable with completely remodelling and rationalising the teaching of the apostles. The latter, no doubt, hold that direct Messianic prophecy existed in Old Testament times, and even that the whole Old Testament admits of interpretation in a directly Messianic sense; but then they never allege that this Messianic sense was perceived by the men of Old Testament times; much less do they allege that faith in Christ was exercised through the perception of it. No, but they give us quite frequently to understand that they held an opinion the direct opposite of that which is commonly attributed to them. They teach that the Messianic sense of the Old Testament was a "mystery" to the men of Old Testament times,—a mystery "which hath been kept in silence through times eternal, but *now* [in the apostolic age] is manifested, and *by the Scriptures of the prophets . . .* is made known unto all nations, for obedience of faith" (Rom. xvi. 25, 26),—"the mystery of Christ, which in other generations was not made known unto the sons of men, as it hath *now* been revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets through the Spirit" (Eph. iii. 4, 5),—"the salvation concerning which the pro-

phets sought and searched diligently . . . to whom it was revealed that *not unto themselves but unto you* they did minister these things, which have *now* [in the apostolic age] been announced unto you, through them that preached the Gospel unto you *with the Holy Ghost sent forth from heaven*" (1 Pet. i. 10-12); so that, by the common testimony of the apostles, the Old Testament on its aspect as Messianic prophecy, not less than on its aspect as law, has true significance and value only for the men of *New Testament* times, who are under the guidance of inspired apostles and prophets. The Apostle Paul in particular manifestly believes and teaches, in the passage before us, that the advent of faith in Christ and the advent of the Christ of faith were coincident in point of time, and that the one was impossible apart from the other. Before the advent of Christ faith had not yet come, but men were kept in bondage under the letter of the law, especially under its ceremonial ordinances—"the elements of the world;" and only after the fulness of the time came, when God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, did *we* escape from our bondage into the liberty of adopted sons of God (iv. 1-5). In this it is clearly involved that men who died before the advent of Christ never did and never could have escaped from bondage under the elements of the world, and that the law could have served as a tutor only with reference to "us"—the generation subsequent to the coming of Christ—the apostle and his contemporaries. Even to say that the law served as a tutor from the coming of Christ onwards is saying a deal too much; for when Paul speaks of the law as a tutor unto Christ, he has in view mainly the ceremonial law, and the moral only in so far as it had become a dead letter through being sunk in the ceremonial and identified with it; but as the ceremonial law was entirely set aside very soon after the apostle wrote, and as even the moral law ceased to be practised in the dead-letter form which it had previously, the function of tutor could not in these circumstances continue to be discharged either by the law as a whole or by any part of it. Indeed, it is quite manifest that the apostle conceived of the whole law as having been ripe for supersession as soon

as Christ came in the fulness of time. The very point of his argument is that since the law had served as a tutor *up to* the coming of Christ, it could serve no useful purpose whatever *after* the coming of Christ, and *therefore* observance of it ought to be discontinued as unprofitable. Nothing is farther from the apostle's thoughts than the notion, favoured by theologians, that the moral law, in separation from the ceremonial, should be allowed to continue alongside of the Gospel, in order to act as a tutor. However much truth there may be in such an idea, assuredly it was not present to the mind of the writer of our epistle. For according to him, the law was instituted only for the time of the world's childhood, "till the seed should come to whom the promise hath been made." It cannot, at least in the apostle's judgment it ought not, to survive, either in whole or in part, after the world's majority—"the term appointed of the Father"—has been attained. The Sinaitic covenant was not the complement of the Abrahamic in the sense that it was meant to exist and operate alongside of the Abrahamic, but only in the sense that it was meant to prepare the way for the establishment of the Abrahamic, when, having fully discharged its function, it behoved to pass away. Thus it is only to the single generation that happened to exist at the fulness of time that the law is thought of as playing the part of a tutor, or as serving any useful purpose whatever. In other words, the law has positive value only *for the apostle's own readers*. For all other parties it is not only valueless, but positively pernicious.

It is true, then, beyond all doubt that the Apostle Paul represents the entire pre-Christian world, from Abraham downwards, as having lived and died in a state of abject unmitigated slavery to a system of ordinances having no proper religious validity. During the interval that elapsed from the promise of the dispensation of grace made to Abraham to the practical realisation of that promise in Christ, the only dispensation in existence was the dispensation of law, which, in contrast to grace, was nothing but a dead letter, utterly powerless to confer righteousness and life. No one, therefore, during that entire period, did or could enter heaven, or attain to fellowship with God. The religion of the pre-Christian world

was not living religion of the heart, but dead formal religion of the lips ; and it was so from the nature of the case ; it was even intended by God to be so. The religion of Old Testament times consisted exclusively in dead mechanical obedience to the letter of the law, especially the ceremonial law, and the Sinaitic covenant which formed the necessary basis of this religion was imposed by God for no other purpose than to keep the hands of the world full till the religion of truth and reality should make its appearance. The religion of the pre-Christian period was intended merely to serve as a foil and a preparation to the religion of the generation contemporary with the Apostle Paul. When the men of pre-Christian times imagined they were serving God by obeying the letter of the Mosaic law (and they *could* only obey the letter), they were but deluding themselves, and playing with their eternal interests ; and the game, though it was death to the players, was of no real practical benefit to any one. The Sinaitic covenant was not even the means of convincing Old Testament letter-law-observers of sin, it rather imposed upon them, leading them to suppose that letter-obedience was all that God required. The only parties who really derived benefit from the introduction of the Sinaitic covenant were the first generation of Christians, to whom it was the means of conviction of sin, and so the "tutor unto Christ," though only after Christ had appeared, and the Abrahamic promise had begun to be realised.

Now, it is superfluous to say of a doctrine so truly monstrous that it is wholly unhistorical. Indeed, the apostle himself confesses as much, for he elsewhere not only admits, but expressly teaches, that even in the worst periods of Israel's history there was "a remnant according to the election of grace" (Rom. xi. 4, 5). The view of Old Testament religion presented in the paragraph quoted above betrays, on the most superficial examination, that it is systematic, not historical, and that it has been directly concocted for a practical purpose. Like the corresponding representations in the Epistle to the Hebrews, it has evidently been constructed by *à priori* dogmatic reflection on isolated passages of Old Testament Scriptures, simply with the intention of grounding upon it a



practical exhortation : that being done, it can at once be thrown aside, even by the writer himself, as utterly worthless. The whole is plainly the result, not of induction, but of deduction, and of deduction that is transparently erroneous and unwarrantable. The apostle's object is to induce his readers to cease from seeking salvation through mechanical obedience to the *ceremonial* law, and to begin, or rather to continue, seeking salvation through vital spiritual obedience to the *moral* law. He himself, in common with almost all his contemporaries, had once sought salvation by the first of these methods, and had continued to do so utterly unconscious that it was not the true method, till Christ had appeared and given him a deeper view. Then he had turned to the second, receiving the Spirit of God in response to faith in Christ, being thereby enabled to meet the requirements of the *moral* law, and obtaining in consequence the life in which the essence of salvation consists. Henceforth the ordinances of the *ceremonial* law appeared to him as mere heathenish lumber, imposed for the purpose of keeping him at work in the position of a slave, till the proper time should come for his being called to the rights, privileges, and duties of a son ; while the ordinances of the *moral* law, so lofty and spiritual in their nature, so impossible for him to fulfil in his own natural strength, and yet so awful in their threatenings against transgression, seemed to have been appointed — negatively, for the purpose of reducing him to utter helplessness, by convincing him of his absolute inability to attain salvation through natural law-obedience—positively, for the purpose of shutting him up to accept salvation through spiritual law-obedience, by believing on Christ as soon as He should appear to offer the Spirit of God. This being the history of salvation in the apostle's own experience, he proceeds to draw from it the following inferences as to the history of salvation in the experience of the world generally, viz. :—

(1) That the law never was obeyed, and never was intended to be obeyed, in any other than the dead-letter form in which he had attempted to obey it before Christ had appeared to him ; (2) that the Spirit of God never was given except in response to specific faith *in Christ* such as he had exercised

after Christ had appeared to him ; (3) that up to the advent of Christ the world was in a state of tutelage and bondage identical with that in which he was up to the appearance of Christ to him personally, and that the law, which kept the world and him in subjection, was instituted by God for this express purpose and no other ; (4) that though Abraham, to whom the Gospel of Christ was preached beforehand, and to whom the promise was given that it should be ultimately preached to the whole world, might receive the Spirit of God through faith in Christ, and so attain to righteousness and life, no one else either did or could do so till Christ appeared in person, bearing and offering the gift of the Spirit of God as the source of living, spiritual law-obedience. Now, as it happens, every one of these inferences is directly contrary to fact. The law was *not* always the dead letter which the Apostle Paul, before his conversion, had found it to be : the Spirit of God *was* given in response to faith that was not specifically faith *in Christ* : the world was *not* in a state of universal tutelage and bondage up to the advent of Christ, and the law was *not* instituted by God to keep it in such a state : there *were* men, during the whole course of Old Testament history, who received the Spirit of God in response to general faith in God, and who rendered true spiritual obedience to the law through the help of the Spirit so received, and thereby attained to righteousness and life. The apostle's theory of Old Testament religion has arisen simply through projecting his own experience, before and after conversion, back into the history of Old Testament times. Instead of investigating what Old Testament religion actually was by the historical study of the Old Testament itself, he has assumed *à priori* what it must have been, viz.,—since it could not be absolutely identical with what he had experienced genuine religion to be—absolutely identical with what he had experienced counterfeit religion to be.

In point of fact there existed both genuine and counterfeit religion in Old Testament times, but neither the one nor the other was *absolutely* identical with the genuine and the counterfeit religion of the apostolic age, though both were *substantially* so. More particularly, at the Christian era

genuine religion received a new impulse in consequence of the appearance of God in human nature, on the one hand, embodying in Himself a perfect example of that religion, and on the other hand, bestowing on the world a fuller measure of its spirit, while at the same time counterfeit religion received a corresponding check. This is the real state of the case as regards the relation between the pre- and post-Christian religion of the world, and the judicious reader, however partial to authority when uncontradicted by plain historical fact, will be compelled to reject the apostle's account of it.

It need not be added that the apostle's argument in favour of the abrogation of the entire Mosaic law is in no degree strengthened by allegorising in support of it the passage of Genesis relating to the disinheriting of Ishmael in favour of Isaac, making Hagar a type of the Sinaitic covenant as mechanically obeyed by "the Jerusalem that now is,"—*i.e.*, by the Israel of the apostolic age, understood as strictly representative of Israel from Moses downwards; and Sarah a type of the Abrahamic covenant as spiritually obeyed by "the Jerusalem that is above,"—*i.e.*, by Christ and all who believe on Christ; and construing the words, "Cast out the bond-woman and her son, for the son of the bond woman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman"—words which were really spoken by Sarah without any reference but the plain and obvious one—as if they had been spoken direct by God, and spoken with a distinct typical reference to the abrogation of the dead letter of Judaism in favour of the living spirit of Christianity (Gal. iv. 21-31). The fact that the apostle has recourse to such puerile Rabbinical whimsies for the purpose of defending his position, serves only to show how thoroughly indefensible his position is, and how entirely destitute of real historical Scriptural authority.

Nothing less can be said of the allegory which the apostle discovers in the shining and veiling of Moses' face at the revelation of the Sinaitic covenant (2 Cor. iii. 6-18). That allegory has been manufactured, and is introduced, for the very same purpose as the previous—*viz.*, to prove that the whole Sinaitic dispensation, and especially the *moral* part of it, "written and engraven on stones," was destined from the very beginning

to pass away, as being from its very nature what it had well-nigh universally become in the apostolic age—a dead letter utterly devoid of saving efficacy. The shining of Moses' face was ephemeral, and this was intended for a type of the ephemeral character of the dispensation from which the shining was a reflection. When Moses veiled his face, he did so with the view of concealing from the children of Israel the fact that the dispensation which he administered was not a final or permanent, but an ephemeral, fleeting, abortive dispensation. As a matter of fact, the dispensation was *not* ephemeral (Matt. v. 18). And the idea that the transitory shining of Moses' face was meant to typify that or anything else is just a product—one among many—of the current Rabbinico-Alexandrian exegesis.

Nor, again, can the apostle derive any real assistance from the analogy which he draws into his service in Rom. vii. 1, *seq.* He asserts that, because the covenant between husband and wife is dissolved by the death of either or both of the contracting parties, therefore the covenant made at Sinai must be dissolved in the same way. But loose, general analogies of this description might be adduced to support almost any view of any subject. For example, the author of Hebrews adduces an analogy quite as much to the point to prove that the death of either or both of the contracting parties, so far from dissolving a covenant like the Sinaitic, is rather the means, and the necessary means, of ratifying and making it valid (ix. 16, 17)! The covenant between husband and wife is avowedly a covenant *for life only*. The covenant between God and Israel at Sinai was avowedly an *everlasting* covenant (Deut. v. 29; Ps. lxxxix. 3, 4, &c.). So that the apostle's analogy fails entirely in the only really essential point. Besides, the analogy, if it prove anything, must prove a great deal too much, since it implies that there can be no such thing as punishment in the future life, the unregenerate dead having been freed by death from all their legal obligations!

The Apostle Paul has nowhere applied *the typical method of interpretation* with anything like the same detail as the author of Hebrews, for the purpose of setting aside the Jewish



ceremonial law. With the author of Hebrews that is the principal instrument by which the abrogation of the ceremonial law is sought to be justified ; with Paul it is at the best only a subordinate instrument. The principal instrument or expedient by which Paul attempts to get rid of the ceremonial law, is the driving of a forced antithesis between the law as a whole and the promise made to Abraham, as between a covenant of the letter and of death on the one hand and a covenant of the spirit and of life on the other. Still, the typical method of interpretation was in the air, and the apostle has adopted it, implicitly if not explicitly, in a variety of passages and connections.

For example, in a passage already quoted from Colossians, where it is said that meats and drinks, feast days, new moons, and Sabbath days are a shadow of the things to come, and that the corresponding body or substance is Christ's, the typical method of interpretation is evidently applied in exactly the same way, and to exactly the same purpose, as the writer to the Hebrews applies it. Again, when believers are exhorted to present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God (Rom. xii. 1 ; *cf.* xv. 16 ; Phil. ii. 17 ; iv. 18), when it is said that " Our passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ : wherefore, let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth " (1 Cor. v. 7, 8), and elsewhere, that " Christ gave himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God, for an odour of a sweet smell " (Eph. v. 2) —in these and other similar cases (*cf.* Phil. iii. 3 ; Col. ii. 11 ; 1 Cor. iii. 16 ; 2 Cor. vi. 16 ; 1 Cor. ix. 13 ; x. 18), it is clearly implied that the Jewish sacrifices and other ritual observances bore a typical reference to the spiritual realities of the Gospel dispensation.

But by far the most noteworthy of all the Apostle Paul's implicit applications of the typical method is contained in the famous passage, Rom. iii. 24-26. The fact that this passage, in preference to others of equal or greater importance, should have been selected for designation as " the Acropolis of the Christian faith," furnishes a good illustration of the avidity with which theologians pounce upon every passage where the

apostles clothe their ideas in figurative language borrowed from the Old Testament, as if there and there only the true nature of the Christian plan of salvation were distinctly revealed, and could be definitely discovered. The Old Testament ritual forms may have the remotest resemblance conceivable, or no resemblance at all, to the New Testament spiritual facts, which they are understood to have typified, and which they are used to set forth: all the same, the language of these, which are probably no better than heathenish, forms must be assumed to afford the ideal expression, and the absolute measure of the deepest and most vital truths of the Christian religion; it must be elevated into the standard language of theology, and everything else which the New Testament, or, for that matter, which the Bible contains, must be hammered and twisted into accordance with it. It would be out of place to traverse again ground that has been already so fully traversed in dealing with the Epistle to the Hebrews: all that I propose to do in connection with this passage is to present some aspects, real and supposed, of the earthly experiences of Christ, in themselves and in their relation to the earthly experiences of each believer, which may not yet have been laid before the reader with sufficient fulness and clearness.

The Apostle Paul speaks of Christ Jesus as one "whom God set forth [to be an] expiatory [sacrifice]." And the Apostle John, in like manner, says that "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world" (1 John ii. 2). Theologians assume, as a matter of course, that the word *expiation* or *propitiation* (ἱλασμός, ἱλαστήριον) in these passages is to be understood quite literally. There is some doubt, however, as to what the literal meaning actually is. We have seen that the author of Hebrews uses the word "expiate" (ἱλάσκεσθαι) as a synonym for "purify" (καθαρίζω) or "sanctify" (ἀγιάζω), implying that in his judgment the object aimed at in the offering of an expiatory sacrifice is the purification or sanctification of the worshipper, by which is meant the total removal of sin from his person, and through that, of course, the turning away of the Divine displeasure which sin evoked. Now, a good deal

of evidence can undoubtedly be led to show that this is the proper historical sense of the word in the Greek Version of the Old Testament. And if the word is certainly used in this sense in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and probably used in this sense in the Greek Version of the Old Testament, it is hard to see upon what rational ground it can be understood in any other sense in the writings of Paul and John. Theologians, however, have no manner of difficulty in disposing of the matter. The above meaning, however interesting in other respects, does not suit their theory, and, therefore, it must be ruled out of court, and treated very much as if it had no existence. If Jewish sacrifices be found *unsatisfactory*, unmitigatedly heathen sacrifices may be found more to the purpose. Still, there is room for dubiety even here. If we may trust the highest authorities on such questions, the inner idea attached to sacrifice varied considerably in different ages and countries. In the earliest ages sacrifices were offered simply to feed the gods (*cf.* Ps. l. 12, 13). In later times the rite was frequently observed for no other reason than because it was customary, and because somehow or other—no one cared to inquire very distinctly how—it pleased the gods, whose good pleasure it was prudent to retain. When Jephthah offered his daughter, and Mesha his son, they did so because they imagined that such offerings would gratify Javeh and Chemosh. So when Agamemnon sacrificed Iphigenia (if this be not the Jephthah incident dressed up in a poetic garb). It was by no means necessary that the anger of the gods should be awakened by special sins before sacrifice could be required by them; much less was it necessary that the sufferings of the victim offered should be proportioned to the sin committed. The gods were supposed to be pleased with sacrifice whatever might be their mood of mind, whether angry or indifferent, and whatever might be the cause of that mood, whether mere caprice, or the sin of the offerer, or something else. But it was not the torture of the victim that pleased and propitiated them. Rather, it was the surrender of the victim's life, as of its dearest possession, as of that which made it of any value either to itself or to the offerer. Hence the gods were pleased not merely with the lives of men and animals, but with other

material gifts valuable to the offerer. And although, in the case of the God of Israel, who was a God of righteousness, sin became an all-important factor in connection with sacrifice, and became so more and more as the nation's sense of sin deepened in the later disastrous portion of its history, sin being the occasion of provoking the Divine displeasure which sacrifice was needed to remove, it was otherwise in the case of the heathen deities. These, not being righteous themselves, did not affect to be much troubled about sin; the cause of their displeasure, when they were displeased, was usually something else. A heathen propitiatory sacrifice, so far from implying the removal of the offerer's sin, does not even imply that he has sin to remove; it merely implies that he desires to produce a favourable impression on the mind of the deity toward himself. Even in the case of a Jewish expiatory sacrifice, the blood atoned not through the sufferings but through the soul or life (Lev. xvii. 11), and the God of Israel, not less than the gods of the heathen, was pleased with other material gifts besides the lives of animals, though neither burnt-offering, nor sin-offering, nor any other kind of offering, was acceptable to Him, unless there were at the same time a repentant and obedient heart.

But, as already said, theologians have no difficulty either in assuming that the word "propitiation" must be understood literally, or in settling what the literal meaning actually is. If the object aimed at by the death of Christ was, directly, the sanctification of those on whose behalf it took place, indirectly, the removal of God's anger towards them on the ground of that sanctification, then the death of Christ must have really effected this object. But if the death of Christ really effected this object, it could not possibly have done so *after the manner of a literal expiatory sacrifice*, one half of the parties concerned having already reached the unchangeable state, and the other half not having yet come into existence. Therefore (theologians infer) the object aimed at in an expiatory sacrifice cannot be the removal of God's anger through the removal of the sin which evoked it. What, then, can it be? It must be the removal of God's anger simply in the way that the anger of heathen deities was supposed to be removed, and their favour conciliated, by offering to them the



lives of men, or animals, or other material gifts. But even so, there are serious difficulties in the way of understanding how the death of Christ could be an expiatory sacrifice of the kind here indicated. For the circumstances under which the heathen and Jewish sacrifices were offered differed entirely from the circumstances that existed in the case of Christ. When the heathen offered sacrifice to appease the anger of the gods, that anger was always supposed to be directed against the offerers, to whom the favour of the gods was held to be conciliated in the act of offering. So with the Jewish sacrifice, on the day of atonement, which, if offered to appease the wrath of God at all, was offered to appease wrath awakened by the sins of the parties offering, to whom the favour of God was immediately conciliated. But in the case of Christ, the people with reference to whom the sacrifice is supposed to be offered are the whole world, or the whole body of believers throughout the world's history. The wrath of God which is said to be appeased is wrath awakened by sins one half of which have already been done away, the persons concerned being thereby admitted to the divine favour, and the other half of which have not yet been committed; and the persons to whom the favour of God should be immediately conciliated are for the most part either persons whose final destiny is already fixed, or persons who have not yet come into existence. Surely one may be allowed to demand very distinct evidence before he accept a doctrine involving consequences at once so strange and so preposterous!

Possibly we shall be told that the sins which awakened the wrath of God appeased by the death of Christ were the sins of all believers *imputed to Christ*. But the idea that innumerable sins which have not even been committed, which have not and never had any existence, were imputed to Christ, in such a manner that while lying on Him they awakened the wrath of God, is itself so singularly extravagant and improbable, that nothing but the most overwhelming evidence would warrant us in entertaining it even for a moment. And where is such evidence to be found? How do we know that God was angry, and that Christ was offered on account of imputed sin? When we ask for proof that the sins of all believers

were imputed to Christ, the answer, in the entire absence of direct evidence, can only be, because the death of Christ was a proper expiatory sacrifice. When we ask how the death of Christ could have been a proper expiatory sacrifice, the answer is, because the sins of all believers were imputed to Him. Which is an evident circle.

Besides, even if we assume that the sins which awakened the wrath of God appeased by the death of Christ were the sins of all believers imputed to Christ, the difficulties are scarcely if at all diminished. For it is certain that, with respect to all pre-Christian believers, the wrath of God was already laid aside as soon as they repented; and it is equally certain that, with respect to all post-Christian believers, the wrath of God is not laid aside until they repent. How, then, could the death of Christ have appeased the wrath of God towards the whole body of believers, or, indeed, towards any believer, Christ Himself excepted? How could the offering of Christ have propitiated God towards all believers, as a heathen's offering was supposed to propitiate his god towards himself, or as the annual Jewish offering is alleged to have propitiated God towards the whole living generation of Israelites? The thing is impossible, absurd, contradictory. If the sins of the Israelites were imputed to the goat, they were 'no longer imputed to the Israelites, and as soon as the goat was offered, God was propitious, not to the goat, but to the Israelites. So with the heathen sacrifices, if imputation be assumed in their case also. But in the case of Christ, however the sins of believers may have been imputed to Him, they certainly did not cease to be imputed to them, nor was God a whit more propitious either to them or to the world generally after the offering of Christ than before.

It will be said perhaps that if Christ did not immediately render God propitious to the whole body of believers by the act of His death, still He *impetrated* propitiation, and this propitiation which Christ impetrated is *applied* to each believer in the first moment of faith. But here again we are plunging into the depths of the most miserable scholastic sophistry. What is meant by impetrating propitiation? The normal effect of an expiatory sacrifice is to produce a favour-

able feeling in the mind of the deity toward the person or persons with reference to whom the sacrifice is offered. The sacrifice may be offered either by a professional priest, or by the person or persons themselves: in either case the effect is exactly the same—immediate change in the feeling of the deity toward the person or persons. Such is propitiation. But what is the impetration of propitiation? And how is propitiation, once impetrated, applied? Above all, what warrant is there, either from analogy to heathen or Jewish sacrifices, or from the language of the New Testament, for drawing such a distinction? Is the distinction a pure figment of scholasticism, or is it not? I suppose that by the impetration of propitiation is meant the propitiation of God, not towards the whole body of believers, the parties with reference to whom the sacrifice is offered, but towards Christ, the sacrifice itself; that by the application of propitiation is meant the propitiation of God towards each individual believer; and that the application is made by *imputing* the expiatory death of Christ to each individual believer, so as to effect in his case what it has already effected in Christ's own. But this scheme, even if sustained by evidence, would be weighted with enormous difficulties.

In the first place, it completely destroys any analogy that may have seemed to exist between the so-called atoning work of Christ and an ordinary expiatory sacrifice. For, assuming that the sins of the whole generation of Israelites were imputed to the goat, and that the goat suffered death instead of the Israelites, bearing the penalty due to their sins, God was not first rendered propitious to the (dead) goat (!), and then separately and subsequently to each individual Israelite, by the imputation to him of the expiatory death of the goat. Such a thing would have been utterly incongruous and disproportioned, as was shown in a previous connection. If the death of Christ was an expiatory sacrifice for the whole body of believers, if the sins of all believers were imputed to Christ, and their penalty inflicted and borne by Christ, if the wrath of God awakened by all these sins, instead of falling on believers, expended itself upon Christ, to whom the *cause* which evoked it had been transferred, how comes it that the

Divine anger is not immediately appeased? If punishment have the effect of satisfying the Divine justice and appeasing the Divine anger at all, why did it not do so in the present case? And again, why should the merits of a sacrifice, adequate to expiate the sins of *all* believers in every age of the world's history, be imputed to *each* individual believer in every age of the world's history?

Nor is this all. There being no pretence whatever for alleging that the mere death of Christ is imputed to each individual believer, theologians assert that the thing imputed is the *obedience and sufferings* of His whole life, maintaining that the aggregate which these constitute is expressed in the New Testament by the word *righteousness* (*δικαιοσύνη*). It might have been presumed that the lifelong sufferings alone would constitute the expiatory work of Christ, for as the Jewish, if not also the heathen, sacrificial victims were always brute creatures, incapable from their very nature of intelligent obedience, obedience could form no part of an ordinary expiatory sacrifice. Yet nothing is more common than to find it asserted that, if the death of Christ had been involuntary, it would not have constituted a sacrifice at all, but simply an ordinary crucifixion. Perhaps we may suppose that, while the lifelong sufferings alone corresponded to the death of the victim, the lifelong obedience was equally necessary as a counterpart to the voluntary action of the priest in making the offering. Still, it appears strange that the voluntary action of the priest should be imputed to each believer along with the proper merits of the sacrifice. Apart from this, however, it is plain that when the lifelong sufferings of Jesus are set down as part of His atoning work, His so-called sacrifice assumes an entirely different character from that in which we have hitherto regarded it, and wears the aspect of something altogether unique, totally different from every other expiatory sacrifice that was ever heard of. In ordinary sacrifices, whether Jewish or heathen, the sufferings of the victim were of no account, and are never alluded to; the death was the only point of importance, and as that took place instantaneously, the suffering attending it was reduced to a minimum. But here the sufferings are so far from being unimportant that they



constitute the very essence of the expiatory work. The expiatory value of the offering is held to be measured, partly by the amount of suffering undergone, and partly by the dignity of the victim undergoing it. The sufferings of Jesus are supposed to have been exceeding great, while the dignity of His person was the highest possible, the result being that the expiatory value of His offering was altogether infinite. And since the sufferings of Jesus extended throughout His whole life, the act, or rather the process, of offering occupied somewhere about *thirty-three years!* I need not say that *such* a sacrifice, *so* offered, on *such* an altar, by *such* a priest, in *such* a sanctuary, bears no resemblance at all to the thing which in common speech is called an expiatory sacrifice, that it cannot therefore be an expiatory sacrifice in the proper literal sense of the word. Nor need I remind the reader that when the author of Hebrews represents Christ in the character of a priest as offering Himself in the form of a sacrifice, he does so by representing all that He ever did from the foundation of the world, or will yet do to its consummation, on behalf of sinful men as being done in the act of His death. Only in this way could even the "shadow" of a parallel be made out between the action of Jesus as Saviour of the world and the action of the Jewish high priest as *atoner* of the whole people of Israel.

But to pass from these and other equally gross absurdities connected with them, which have already received far more attention than they deserve, let us endeavour to establish by irresistible evidence the true nature of Christ's earthly experience and the relation that subsists between it and the earthly experience of each believer. An answer on both these points will have been given if we can show that *the obedience and sufferings of every believer, while on earth, are exactly the same in nature and in effect as were the obedience and sufferings of Christ.* I say in *nature* and in *effect*; for, of course, the degree varies in the case of each believer, as well as in the case of Christ.

Scores of texts might be quoted in proof of this position. For the present let the following suffice:—"If when ye do well and suffer, ye endure, this is acceptable (*χάρις*) with God

[*cf.* “Ye know the grace (χάρις) of our Lord Jesus Christ, who . . . for your sakes became poor” (2 Cor. viii. 9)]; for unto this [endurance of sufferings on behalf of Christ (Phil. i. 29)] were ye called (1 Thes. iii. 3, 4; Acts xiv. 22), because Christ also suffered on behalf of you, leaving you an example that ye should follow His steps; who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth [=who did well], who, when He was reviled, reviled not again, when He suffered He threatened not [=who suffered and endured], but delivered Himself over to Him that judgeth righteously [=inflicteth suffering or punishment (as well as bestoweth reward) where it is due—which it was in the present case, as witness], who Himself carried our sins in His body up to the tree, in order that we, having died [after His example (ὑπογραμμόν, v. 21) as slaves] to our sins, might live [after His example as slaves] to His righteousness” (1 Pet. ii. 20-24). “But even if ye should suffer on account of righteousness, happy are ye . . . for it is better, if God should so will, to suffer while doing well than while doing ill; because Christ also [not less than you] once suffered for sins, a righteous one [=while doing well] on behalf of unrighteous ones [=while we were yet sinners (Rom. v. 8)], that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in and through [His sinful] flesh, but made alive in and through [His holy] spirit” (iii. 14-18; *cf.* Rom. i. 3, 4; viii. 10, 11). “Therefore, since Christ hath suffered in the [sinful] flesh [thereby dying as a slave to sin, and since ye were called to follow his steps], arm yourselves also with the same [holy] mind [with which Christ armed Himself], because he that hath suffered in the [sinful] flesh [as both Christ and ye have done] hath ceased from sin [by dying as a slave thereto, in order henceforth to live as a slave to righteousness]” (iv. 1, 2; *cf.* Rom. vi. 1-11; Col. ii. 11-15; iii. 1-11; Eph. vi. 10-12, &c.). “Inasmuch as ye have fellowship in the sufferings of Christ, rejoice; [for ye suffer with Him] in order that in the revelation of His glory also [not less than in His sufferings] ye may rejoice with exceeding joy [being glorified with Him (Rom. viii. 17, &c.)] If ye are reproached in the name of Christ, happy are ye, because the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you [as it rested upon Christ, whose reproach was

identical in nature with yours]. . . . It is now (i. 6) the time when the judgment [with its awards of suffering to the sinful (*cf.* “*judgeth* righteously” (ii. 23))] has begun at the House of God; and if it hath first begun at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel of God? And if the righteous [=they that do well—Christ and we] is saved with difficulty [through much tribulation (Acts xiv. 22)], where shall the ungodly and the sinner [=they that do ill, that obey not the Gospel of God] appear? Wherefore let them also [as well as Christ (ii. 23)] that suffer according to the will of God deliver over themselves while doing well to a faithful Creator [=to “Him that judgeth righteously” (ii. 23)]” (iv. 13-19; *cf.* v. 1, 10). “We ourselves glory in you in the Churches of God, for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and the afflictions which ye endure [—persecutions and afflictions which are] a manifest token (*ἐνδειγμα*; *cf.* Rom. iii. 25, *ἐνδειξις*; Phil. i. 28, 29, *ἐνδειξις*) of the righteous judgment of God [with its awards of suffering to the sinful, “beginning” with the House of God], to the end that [having been made perfect through sufferings (1 Pet. v. 10)] ye may be counted worthy of the Kingdom of God, on behalf of which ye also suffer [*cf.* “Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory” in consequence thereof (Luke xxiv. 26)]: [the *righteous* judgment of God], if so be that it is a righteous thing with God [at “the end”] to recompense affliction to them that afflict you, and to you that are afflicted rest with us, at the revelation of the Lord Jesus . . . rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus; who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and the glory of His might, when He shall come to be glorified in His saints” (2 Thes. i. 4-10). “Now I rejoice in my sufferings on your behalf, and fill up that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ [in His flesh (v. 22)] in my flesh on behalf of His body, which is the Church” (Col. i. 24). “I am already being offered, and the time of my departure is come; I have fought the good fight [of afflictions (Col. i. 24, 29; ii. 1)], I have perfected the race-course, I have kept the faith, henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of [=due

to] righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge [=who inflicts suffering on the sinful and confers glory on the righteous], will recompense to me on that [the judgment] day" (2 Tim. iv. 6-8). "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . who comforteth us in all our affliction, that we may be able to comfort them that are in any affliction through the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound unto us, so our comfort also aboundeth through Christ. Now, whether we be afflicted, it is on behalf of your comfort and salvation, or whether we be comforted, it is on behalf of your comfort, which worketh in the endurance of the same sufferings [of Christ] which we also suffer; and our hope is steadfast on your behalf, knowing that as ye have fellowship in the sufferings [of Christ], so also ye shall have fellowship in the consolation [through Christ]" (2 Cor. i. 3-7). "We are pressed by affliction on every side, yet not straitened; perplexed, yet not unto despair; persecuted, yet not forsaken; smitten down, yet not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the putting to death of Jesus [=the suffering of Jesus (Matt. xvi. 21; Mark viii. 31; Luke ix. 22; xvii. 25; xxii. 15; xxiv. 26, 46; Acts i. 3; iii. 18; xvii. 3)], in order that [in consequence of so suffering or dying] the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body. For we which live are alway being delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, in order that [in consequence of having died] the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh . . . knowing that he who raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also with Jesus, and shall present us [for judgment and reward (v. 10; 2 Tim. iv. 8; Eph. v. 27; Col. i. 22)] with you; for all [the sufferings] are for your sakes, in order that the grace [through which and to propagate which we suffer (Phil. i. 7, 29; 2 Cor. xii. 9, 10; 1 Pet. v. 10, &c.)], being multiplied through the greater number, may cause the thanksgiving to abound unto the glory of God. Wherefore we faint not; but though our outward man is being destroyed, our inward man is being renewed day by day; for our momentary light burden of affliction worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal heavy burden of glory" (2 Cor. iv. 8-17; cf. 1 Pet. i. 6, 7; Rom. viii. 18). "Only behave



worthily of the Gospel, in order that whether I come and see you, or be absent, I may hear of your state, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one soul contending [“a great *contention* of sufferings” (Heb. x. 32)] for the faith of the Gospel—being also in nothing terrified by your adversaries—which [*contention* of sufferings] is a manifest token (ἐνδειξις; cf. ἐνδειγμα, 2 Thes. i. 5; ἐνδειξις Rom. iii. 25) of perdition [in store] for them, but of salvation [in store] for you, and this [judgment for them and for you] from God, [the righteous judge, who will recompense suffering to the sinful, glory to the righteous—beginning with you the house of God, and ending with them the ungodly adversaries (Rom. ii. 6-10; 2 Thes. i. 5, seq.; 1 Pet. iv. 17, seq.)]; because to you it hath been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer on behalf of Him, [which guarantees your being glorified with Him (2 Tim. ii. 12)]; having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me, [the same conflict also which ye have heard was in Christ (ii. 5-11)]” (Phil. i. 27-30). “Endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ . . . And [to change the figure] if one also *contend*, he is not crowned, except he contend lawfully; the husbandman [to change the figure again] that *laboureth* must be the first to partake of the fruits. . . . Therefore I endure all [sufferings] for the elect’s sakes, in order that they also [as well as I] may obtain [through sufferings] the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. . . . For if we died with Him, we shall also [in consequence] live with Him; if we endure with Him, we shall also [in consequence] reign with Him” (2 Tim. ii. 3-12). “Jesus answereth them, saying, The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone, but if it die, it beareth much fruit. He that loveth his life [=dieth not] loseth it, and he that hateth his life [=dieth] in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve Me, let him follow Me [in suffering and death], and where I am [in glory and life], there shall also My servant be; if any man serve Me, him shall My Father honour [=crown with glory and honour

(Heb. ii. 7, 9)]. Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour. But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy name. . . . Now is the judgment of this world [=the righteous retribution of this world's sin in principle,—*i.e.*, in My person]; now shall the prince of this world be cast out [=shall the sin of this world be brought to nought in principle,—*i.e.*, in My person (Heb. ii. 14, 15; Rom. viii. 3; vi. 6)]. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Myself [leading them after Me in the path first of suffering and then of glory, first of retribution and then of reward (vv. 25, 26)]. Now, this He said, signifying by what death He was about to die" (John xii. 23-33). "From that time began Jesus to show unto His disciples how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up. . . . Then said Jesus unto His disciples, If any man would come after Me [to glory], let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me [in suffering and death]; for whosoever would save his life shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his life for My sake [as I lose My life for his sake, he and I alike losing our lives for the kingdom of heaven's sake (Matt. xxv. 31-46)] shall find it. . . . For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then shall He render to every man according to his deeds [to them who by endurance of suffering—by denying themselves and taking up their cross—while doing well (vv. 35-40) seek for glory and honour and incorruption, eternal life (v. 46); but to them who do none of these things (42-45)—who seek rather to save their life in this world—shall be wrath and indignation, affliction and anguish, in one word, eternal punishment (v. 46); the former class being the righteous, who shall be justified, the latter the unrighteous, who shall be condemned]" (Matt. xvi. 21-27; *cf.* Mark viii. 31-37; Luke ix. 22-26). "And they [James and John] said unto Him, grant unto us that we may sit one on Thy right hand and one on Thy left in Thy glory. But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink the cup that I drink [=endure the sufferings that I endure as the condition of entering into My glory

(Luke xiv. 26 ; xxiv. 26 ; Phil. ii. 9 ; Heb. ii. 9 ; xii. 2)] ? or to be baptised with the baptism that I am baptised with [=undergo the death in slavery to sin that I undergo as the means of My perfection and glorification (Rom. vi. 3, 4 ; Col. ii. 11, 12 ; Heb. ii. 9, 10)] ? And they said unto Him, we are able. And Jesus said unto them, The cup that I drink ye shall drink [=the sufferings that I endure ye shall endure], and with the baptism that I am baptised withal shall ye be baptised [=the death in slavery to sin that I undergo shall ye undergo] ; but to sit on My right hand, and on My left hand, is not Mine to give, but it is for them for whom it hath been prepared [as the reward of *pre-eminent* sufferings while doing well (2 Cor. iv. 17 ; 1 Pet. i. 5, 6, 7 ; Rom. v. 3, 4, 5)] . . . Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles, lord it over them ; and their great ones exercise authority over them ; but it is not so among you ; but whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister, and whosoever would be first among you shall be servant of all. For the Son of Man also [as well as you, whose exemplar He is (Phil. ii. 5, *seq.*, *cf.* ὁσπερ Matt. xx. 28)], came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life [hating or losing His life in this world for the kingdom of heaven's sake (Mark viii. 35 ; Luke xviii. 29, 30 ; John xii. 25, 26)] as a means of redemption [from slavery to sin through death to sin by faith (Tit. ii. 14 ; 1 Pet. i. 18-22 ; Rom. vi. 4) ; *cf.* 'means of expiation *through faith* in His blood' (Rom. iii. 25)] on behalf of many [=all (1 Tim. ii. 6 ; *cf.* Rom. v. 6-8 ; Tit. ii. 14)]" (Mark x. 37-45 ; *cf.* Matt. xx. 21-28).

These quotations, which, though extensive, are by no means exhaustive, prove beyond possibility of doubt that the experiences of each believer are identical in nature and in effect with the experiences of Christ, inasmuch as (1) the sufferings of Christ and the sufferings of believers are alike *punishments* of sin attaching to their persons, they are alike manifestations of the wrath and righteous judgment of God against sin, they are alike the outcome and expression of retributive justice in the same sense that the sufferings of the lost in the future world are of that character : (2) the sufferings of Christ and the

sufferings of believers are alike means of *probation and perfecting* in holy obedience, they are alike means of destroying the old man with his sinful deeds, and of bringing the new man with his holy deeds to perfection, they are the instrument of redemption from slavery to sin, and the condition of resurrection in slavery to righteousness : (3) the sufferings of Christ and the sufferings of believers are alike *altruistic*, being alike undergone on behalf of others, to benefit others, or while doing good to others ; in other words, the sufferings of Christ and the sufferings of Christians as Christians are alike undergone for the kingdom of heaven's sake : (4) the future glory alike of Christ and of each believer is the *reward* of present obedience in the midst of suffering for the kingdom of heaven's sake, and is proportioned to the degree of such obedience ; the future glory, like the present sufferings of Christ and believers, is the outcome and expression of retributive justice in the same sense that the sufferings of the lost in the future world are of that character : (5) we may add that the sufferings of Christ and the sufferings of believers, as believers, are alike undergone *by the grace of God*, which means in the power of the Holy Ghost ; the sufferings of believers as evil-doers falling, of course, into the same category as the sufferings of any other evil-doers, being punishments alone and nothing more.



## CHAPTER X.

“THE ATONEMENT,” ETC.—*Continued.*

IS there then no such thing as the expiation of sin in the ordinary sense of the term? If by expiation of sin is meant a *mere* change in the mind of God, unattended by any corresponding change in the mind of man, then, undoubtedly, there is no such thing. As long as sin continues to exist, so long the anger of God cannot but go forth against it. The carnal mind is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be, and, therefore, the wrath of God must abide upon it, the law of God cannot but curse and condemn it. If sin be taken to mean guilt merely, and if the guilt of the whole human race be thought of as transferred to Christ, and if the anger of God awakened by all this guilt be supposed to have been removed through the sufferings and death of Christ, inasmuch that God is henceforth well pleased instead of being as before angry with the whole human race,—if this be what is meant by expiation, then, I say, undoubtedly, there is no such thing. On the other hand, if it be asked whether God is angry with sinful men at all, whether there is such an attribute as retributive justice in God, whether His anger prompts Him to inflict punishment on sinful men in the shape of suffering and death, whether such punishment is in fact inflicted both on Christ and on believers on account of sin, whether in immediate connection with the endurance of suffering and death, sin, as a living working principle in human nature, is done away, and whether, in consequence of the destruction of sin in human nature, God and men are reconciled, are mutually well pleased and at peace with one another, though they were previously at variance and at enmity on the

one side and on the other,—all these questions must be distinctly answered in the affirmative. The idea of wrath and retribution on account of sin has been sufficiently proved and illustrated in the quotations already made; as also the idea that the principle of sin is done away in immediate connection with suffering and death. The idea of reconciliation between men and God—including well pleasedness of God toward men, and love of men toward God—these two things being mutually dependent, and being the joint outcome of the extinction of sin in the whole nature, whereby righteousness is attained by the believer—this idea will be more fully brought out in the passages now to be cited.

“If any man be in Christ [= in Christ’s nature], he is a new creature; the old things are passed away, behold they are become new. And all the [new] things are of God, that [in renewing us] reconciled us to Himself through Christ [in whose nature received by faith we are new], and gave to us the ministry of reconciliation [for others], to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling [by renewing] the world to Himself, not reckoning unto them [that are renewed] their trespasses [*cf.* “because of the passing over of the sins committed before (faith and repentance or renewal) during the forbearance of God” (Rom. iii. 25)], and hath put in our charge the word of reconciliation [= the word announcing the method of reconciliation]. Therefore we are ambassadors on behalf of Christ [or of God in Christ, who is seeking to reconcile the world to Himself—it being], as though God were entreating by us; we beseech you, on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God [by being united to Christ through faith, and so renewed and made righteous in Christ—which is possible in that] Him who had not known sin He made sin on our behalf [in Adam], in order that we [who had not known righteousness] might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. v. 17-21). “But now, in Christ Jesus, ye [the Gentiles] that once were far off are become near in [or through (Eph. i. 7)] the blood of Jesus [= through death identical in nature with that of Jesus (Rom. vi. 5)]. For He is our peace who made both the [Jews and Gentiles] one, and brake down the middle wall of partition, having brought to nought [in principle] the

enmity [= cause of enmity—sin (Rom. viii. 3, 7, 8; vi. 6)] in His flesh, [wherewith was identified or inseparably bound up] the law of commandments contained in ordinances [which formed the basis of a system of religion purely negative in its character—adapted to men in their fleshly natural state, and having a tendency to keep them in that state and away from God—which formed at the same time the barrier of separation and the cause of enmity between Jews and Gentiles], in order that He might create in Himself [=in His spiritual nature] of the two one new man [or race of men (1 Cor. xv. 22)], so making peace [through renewal]; and [in thus renewing them according to His own Divine nature (iv. 23, 24)] might reconcile both the [Jews and Gentiles in principle] in one body to God through the cross, having slain the enmity [=sin in the flesh] thereby; and [in pursuance of the reconciliation which He effected in principle in His own person] He came and preached peace to you [the Gentiles] that were far off, and peace to them [the Jews] that were near [*cf.* ‘put in our charge the word announcing the method of reconciliation’ (2 Cor. v. 19)]; for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit unto the Father [and are therefore reconciled to God in His spiritual nature, our fleshly nature, like His, having been brought to nought through death]” (Eph. ii. 13-18). “He is the head of the body, the Church; who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, in order that among all [the redeemed] He might have the first place. For it pleased God that in Him all the fulness [of the Spirit] should dwell, and through Him [it pleased God] to reconcile [by renewing through the power of the Spirit] all things unto Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross [whereby sin was brought to nought, and with it the enmity between God and His creatures]; through Him, I say, whether things upon the earth, or things in the heavens. And you [Gentiles] that were once alienated and enemies [to God] in your mind, in your evil works, yet now hath He reconciled [by enabling you to ‘put off the old man with his doings’ through death, and to ‘put on the new man, which is renewed after the image of Him that created him’ (iii. 9, 10)—this being done in accordance with, and in virtue of, the principle

settled by Christ as 'first-born'] in the body of His flesh through death [—death being the means whereby the sin that existed in the body of His flesh was brought to nought—], to present you [after being renewed and reconciled (Eph. v. 26)] holy and without blemish and unreprouceable before Him" (Col. i. 18-22). "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead in a body, and in Him [=in His Divine nature] ye are made full, who is the Head of all principality and power; in whom ye were also circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, [consisting] in the putting off of the body of the flesh [through death—consisting, that is to say,] in the circumcision of Christ, [when He put off the body of His flesh through death], having been buried with Him [= like as He was buried] in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with Him [=like as He was raised] through faith, [by which ye appropriated or submitted yourselves to] the working of God, that raised Him from the dead. And you that were dead through your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, you, I say, did He quicken together with Him, having forgiven us [who were so quickened] all our trespasses, [= 'not reckoning to them (who were renewed) their trespasses' (2 Cor. v. 19)]; having blotted out the manuscript with the ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us [= 'the law of commandments contained in ordinances' (Eph. ii. 15)], and He hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross; having put off from Himself the [devilish (Eph. vi. 12)] principalities and powers [=the sin inherent in the body of His flesh, which drew upon Him the law with its curse, and the devil with his tyranny, and which was brought to nought through His death (Eph. ii. 15), along with the law (*id.*) and the devil (Heb. ii. 14) its correlates], He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it" (Col. ii. 9-15). "We who believe on Him that raised Jesus our Lord [as the *beginning*, the first-born (Col. i. 18), the first-fruits (1 Cor. xv. 23)] from the dead, who was delivered up because of our trespasses [in *principle*—*i.e.*, in His own person], and was raised because of our justification [in *principle*—*i.e.*, in His own person (1 Tim. iii. 16)]. Therefore, having been justified by faith [whereby we submitted ourselves to the working of



God—putting off the body of the flesh through death, and being raised through the Spirit of life], we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; through whom also we have had our access into this grace whereby we stand fast [= ‘continue in the faith grounded and stedfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the Gospel’ (Col. i. 23)], and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.\*. . . God commendeth His

\* The preponderance of external authority is in favour of *ἐχωμεν*, *let us have*, instead of *ἔχομεν*, *we have*, in the opening verse of the present chapter; but the internal evidence is as completely decisive in favour of the latter and against the former of these readings as could well be imagined. It is not merely general doctrinal considerations, such as that death, including the destruction of sin, is everywhere represented by Paul as preceding and conditioning justification, while sin is everywhere represented as the sole cause of enmity between men and God, and the sole barrier to reconciliation between them, so that when sin has been done away through death, God and men are necessarily and already at peace—it is not this merely that condemns the idea of an exhortation to personal reconciliation based on the fact that personal justification has taken place; but the immediate context is absolutely opposed to such an idea. In vv. 9, 10, the fact of having been justified in Christ’s blood, and the fact of having been reconciled through Christ’s death, are spoken of as practically identical and interchangeable, both taking place at the same time, and being equally the condition and the guarantee of ultimate eternal salvation. Not only so, but in v. 11 the fact of present continuous rejoicing (in hope of the glory of God) is based on the fact of past reconciliation effected simultaneously with justification. Hence, when we meet in vv. 1, 2 with the same three ideas of justification, reconciliation with God, and rejoicing in hope of the glory of God, it is impossible, on reasonable grounds, to doubt that they stand in exactly the same relation to one another, that justification and reconciliation (whereby peace with God is made a present possession) are regarded as simultaneous past acts, that rejoicing is a present continuous process, based on these acts and arising out of them, and that there is nothing whatever of a hortatory nature in the whole paragraph. This view is further confirmed by the first clause of v. 2, which is undeniably indicative, and which points to an indicative form in the clauses both before and after it. The same clause likewise conspires with the whole connection, and, indeed, with the whole tenor of the epistle, to refute the opinion of some commentators that the participial clause in v. 1 is meant to partake of the hortative character of the principal verb, as if the sense were, *Let us, having got ourselves justified (?) by believing, have peace with God*, and as if the apostle regarded his readers as still unbelievers. 2 Cor. v. 20, which is sometimes cited as a parallel to the hortative *ἐχωμεν*, is not really parallel at all, but rather makes in favour of *ἔχομεν*. For in that verse the exhortation to be reconciled is grounded on the fact of Christ’s personal reconciliation through death to sin, not on that of the believer: the latter is spoken of, not as actually accomplished, but as merely possible or contingent (v. 21). We should obtain a parallel to this in Rom. v. 1 only by omitting *δικαιωθέντες* entirely, and reading *ἐχωμεν ὅν ἐκ πίστεως εἰρήνην*, κ. τ. λ., and even then the statement contained in iv. 24, 25 immediately preceding would render such an exhortation intolerably harsh and abrupt.

love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died on our behalf. Much more, therefore, being now justified in His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath [= kept in the state of reconciliation] through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son [as the example after, and in virtue of, which we died by faith], much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved in His life [= in and through possessing life derived from Him and identical with His]. And not only so, but we also rejoice in God, through whom we have now received the reconciliation" (Rom. iv. 24—v. 10).

No one who reads these, and the passages previously quoted, can entertain a doubt that God was angry with Christ while on earth on account of sin, as He is angry with every man, and particularly with every believer while on earth, on account of sin; that He indicated (*ἐνδείκνυμι*) His anger by inflicting suffering and death on Christ, as He indicates His anger by inflicting suffering and death on each believer; that the anger of God awakened against Christ by the sin attaching to His person was pacified when the sin had been brought to nought through death, as the anger of God awakened against each believer, by the sin attaching to his person, is pacified when the sin is brought to nought through death; that the destruction of sin, the putting off of the sinful body, and the pacification of the Divine anger consequent thereon was a lifelong process in the case of Christ, as it is a lifelong process in the case of each believer; that this process of pacification, consequent on the destruction of sin, was complete as regards the inner man or Spirit of Christ from the first moment of the incarnation, just as it is complete as regards the inner man or spirit of each believer from the first moment of faith; that the process was completed on the whole person of Christ after His resurrection, as it will be completed on the whole person of each believer after his resurrection; and so, finally, that the reconciliation of the world to God, which Christ effected in principle in His own person,—implying as it does the utter destruction of human sin, and the total extinction of the wrath of God awakened by it,—will be fully accomplished, will be effected in its entirety, only when Christ shall have "put all

the enemies under His feet," when death itself, the token (*ἐνδειγμα*) of the Divine anger against sin, shall have been brought to nought (1 Cor. xv. 25, 26), when the all things of which Christ was the first fruits shall have been summed up in Christ (Eph. i. 10), and reconciled to God through Christ (Col. i. 20). Thus, if we continue to apply the terms expiation and propitiation to the process by which men are reconciled to God, it must be distinctly understood that the expiation of sin implies the doing away of sin as a principle in human nature, and that the propitiation of the Divine anger implies the total extinction of that by which the Divine anger was awakened.

The question has been debated with much earnestness whether or not the sufferings of Christ were *penal*, whether they possessed the character of judicial retribution inflicted by God on account of sin. That such a question should ever have been brought under discussion, must be regarded as a somewhat singular phenomenon. One would have thought that the mere fact of Christ's having lived under the moral government of God, and suffered as He did suffer, would have rendered any dispute on such a point impossible. To say that God is righteous, and that He is the Governor of the universe, that "of Him and through Him and unto Him are all things" (Rom. xi. 36), has no meaning whatever unless it mean that *all* the suffering existing in the universe is of the nature of judicial retribution on account of sin, which is the same as saying that it is *penal*. One can deny that the sufferings of Christ were penal only by denying either (1) that He *lived* under the moral government of God—which amounts to a denial that He lived at all; or (2) that He *suffered* under the moral government of God—which amounts to a denial that He suffered at all. Grant that God is, and that He is a rewarder of them that seek after Him, as well as a punisher of them that know Him not: grant (1) that there is a Governor of the universe—One "for whom are all things and through whom are all things" (Heb. ii. 10); and (2) that the Governor of the universe is a righteous Governor—that it can be said of Him, "Righteous art Thou, which art, and which wast, Thou Holy One, because Thou didst thus judge

[=inflict suffering]. . . . Yea, O Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are Thy judgments" (Rev. xvi. 5-7): grant these two things, and it follows inevitably that the sufferings of Christ, like the sufferings of every one else, must have been the expression of the righteous judgment of God, and this is all that is meant when they are affirmed to have been penal. Now, whatever difficulties may be thought to exist in the way of accepting these two postulates, at least it cannot be denied that they are the fundamental postulates on which the entire circle of Scripture teaching on the subject of human suffering rests. It is certainly open to any one to argue that the view which the Bible writers take of prosperity and adversity as the reward and the punishment of righteousness and sin respectively depends directly on their view of the immediateness of the relation between God and the world, and on the absence of any conception on their part of what we are accustomed to speak of as "the laws of nature," and that, consequently, it may not after all express the ultimate truth on the subject. However this may be, there is room for but one opinion as to the matter of fact, that one and all of the writers of Scripture do regard prosperity and adversity, whether in this world or the next, as the reward and the punishment of righteousness and sin respectively. The observed order of things may be such as to prompt the exclamation, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! *how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past tracing out*" (Rom. xi. 33)! But neither the prophets of the Old Testament, nor the apostles of the New, would have refused to join with Moses and the Lamb in saying, "Great and marvellous are Thy works, O Lord God, the Almighty; *righteous and true are Thy ways*, Thou King of the Ages. Who shall not fear, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? *for Thou only art holy . . . for Thy righteous acts have been made manifest*" (Rev. xv. 3, 4). The doctrine that God is the righteous Governor of the universe may be justly said to be *the* doctrine of the Bible. From Genesis to Revelation: with Moses and the prophets not less than with Christ and the apostles; it is central, fundamental, and all-pervasive. It is the main thread which binds the several Scripture writings together.



Remove it from the Bible, and nothing, or almost nothing, will be left. The New Testament, in particular, teaches with an explicitness that is both unsurpassable and unmistakable that suffering and death are invariably the effect of sin, and the wages of it, and that the sufferings and death of Christ, so far from being an exception to the general principle, furnish a signal example and illustration of it. "Through one man sin entered into the world, and *through sin* death, and so death passed unto all men, *for that all sinned*" (Rom. v. 12). "The wages of *sin* is death" (vi. 23). "The sting of death *is sin*; and the power of sin is the law [the expression of God's righteous judgment against sin—witness, 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them' (Gal. iii. 10)]" (1 Cor. xv. 56). "The mind of the flesh is death . . . *because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God*, neither, indeed, can it be; and [therefore] they that are in the flesh cannot please God [but are under His wrath and curse as embodied in the penalty of the law, which is death]" (Rom. viii. 6-8). "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, *having become accursed on our behalf*. . . . God sent forth His Son, born of a woman [and therefore] born under the law [*with its curse or penalty against sin*], that He might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. iii. 13; iv. 4, 5).

If these, and numberless other passages of a like tenor—such as those quoted above to show that the sufferings of Christ were identical in nature with those of believers—do not prove that death in general, and the death of Christ in particular, was and is the penalty of the Divine law, the embodiment of the Divine wrath and righteous judgment against sin,—if they do not prove that death is always and everywhere the effect of sin, and that apart from sin there can be no death,—then it is impossible to prove anything by the use of language. Sin and death are so intimately and so universally associated that they can be spoken of as identical; the mind of the flesh is enmity against God—is sin—is death. Death has no sting, can therefore do no harm, without sin, and sin has no power apart from the law, which expresses the wrath

and curse of God. To ask whether the sufferings of Christ were *penal* amounts very much to the same thing as to ask whether the sufferings of Christ were *painful*. To affirm that the death of Christ was *penal* is equivalent to affirming that the death of Christ was *death*. All the suffering that ever was or ever will be is penal, inasmuch as it is part of the penalty which the law threatens against sin. Every death that ever did and ever will take place is penal in that it constitutes the penalty of the Divine law, the expression of the Divine anger, the wages of sin. The sphere of sin and the sphere of death and the devil are absolutely co-extensive, and the existence of the latter, as living operative powers, is entirely dependent on the existence of the former; when sin has been brought to nought, then death and the devil will be brought to nought, as in like manner when sin came into existence, death and the devil came into existence. Many writers seem to suppose that because, as they think, the sufferings of Christ were chiefly spiritual, therefore they were not penal. But that is abject nonsense. The sufferings of the lost in hell will probably be exclusively spiritual, but all the same they will be penal. The sufferings of vicious as well as virtuous men in the present life are largely spiritual: does it thence follow that they are not penal? But, indeed, it is quite impossible to draw a distinct line between mental and bodily suffering; for bodily suffering affects the mind, and mental suffering affects the body; so that the two are at bottom only one. No more is it possible to fix upon one person and say that while his sufferings and death are penal, the sufferings and death of this other person are not penal at all, but something else. Such notions are really perfectly ridiculous. The relation between sin and death as cause and effect, transgression of law and penalty of law, is as stable and unchangeable as the respective natures of sin and death themselves. All the epithets in the world will not affect it in the very least.

Another much debated but equally frivolous and nonsensical question is whether the sufferings and death of Christ were strictly *vicarious*, whether they were strictly substituted for the sufferings and death of each believer. Strict substitution

of the sufferings and death of Christ for the sufferings and death of each believer would imply, as we before observed, that every believer in the first moment of faith is translated to heaven, and treated exactly as Christ was treated after His sufferings and death had been undergone, when, as the writer to the Hebrews affirms, He was crowned with glory and honour on account of the suffering of death (ii. 9), or, as Paul puts it, God highly exalted Him, giving Him a name that is above every name, because He had humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross (Phil. ii. 8, 9).

Of course we are met here again with another scholastic distinction. The sufferings and death of believers, it is said, are not punishments of sin at all, but merely *chastisements* of the sinner, and as the sufferings and death of Christ were *punishments* of sin (and not chastisements of the sinner), the fact that each believer suffers and dies in exactly the same manner as Christ is not incompatible with the idea that the sufferings and death of Christ were strictly substituted for what should have been those of each believer. That is to say, though believers suffer and die after the example and in the Spirit of Christ (1 Pet. ii. 20, 21); though their sufferings are so absolutely identical in nature with those of Christ that they are spoken of again and again as "the sufferings of Christ" (2 Cor. i. 5; 1 Pet. iv. 13); though believers are said to take up their cross and follow after Jesus (Mark viii. 34), to bear about in the body the putting to death of Jesus (2 Cor. iv. 8), to have fellowship with the sufferings of Christ, becoming conformed unto His death (Phil. iii. 8); though they are declared once and again to suffer (Rom. viii. 17), to die (vi. 8), to be crucified (Gal. ii. 20) *with* Christ—meaning as Christ suffered, died, was crucified; though their sufferings fill up that which is lacking in the afflictions of Christ (Col. i. 24); and much more to the like effect: yet, it is alleged, we must apply the term punishment solely to the sufferings and death of Christ, the term chastisement solely to the sufferings and death of the believer, and hold that the sufferings and death of Christ were the substitute—not for the believer's actual sufferings and death (which were absurd)—but for cer-

tain *penal* sufferings, and a certain *penal* death, which the believer would have suffered in case Christ had not suffered at all ! Curiously enough this allegation is made, not by the parties who deny that the sufferings of Christ were penal, but by the parties who are never tired of affirming that they were penal. Widely as they differ in other respects, both parties appear to agree in the notion that they can change the essential nature of suffering and death as the penalty of sin, though that can be done only at the expense of subverting the moral principles on which the universe is governed, by the simple process of fabricating a scholastic distinction and applying an epithet. Surely more wretched sophistry never entered into human brains !

In the first place, when it is said that the sufferings and death of Christ were punishment, while those of believers are chastisement, it seems to be taken for granted that punishment and chastisement are distinct things. But chastisement is really nothing else than corrective or educative punishment. There is a large and influential school of modern moralists who go so far as to maintain that punishment, as applied to human beings, can be justified on no other ground than *because* it is chastisement, because it is directed to educating and improving the person punished, and the truth of their opinion, though disputed as regards moral beings of mature intelligence, will be universally admitted as regards the lower animals, and probably, too, as regards infants. Anyhow, *all* chastisement is punishment, only it is punishment intended to discipline, correct, or educate the person punished. A person absolutely without fault would have no need for chastisement any more than for punishment, and could not possibly be chastised in the proper sense of the word. Whether *all* punishment, when viewed as the dispensation of providence, is to be regarded as at the same time chastisement need not be here decided ; the converse position that all chastisement is punishment is enough to prove that the sufferings and death of believers are penal ; and such they are constantly represented to be, alike in the Old Testament and in the New, as we have already abundantly shown.

In the second place, there is just as much evidence to prove



that the sufferings and death of Christ were chastisements as there is to prove that the sufferings and death of believers are so. I know not what special Greek word is supposed to convey the idea of chastisement as distinguished from uncastigatory punishment, possibly the word *παιδεία*, which occurs in the twelfth of Hebrews. But in that very passage the writer draws an explicit parallel between the endurance of sufferings by Christ and the endurance of sufferings by each believer, implying that both alike are "sons," and that the sufferings of both are alike chastisements. "If," says he, "ye are without chastisement, whereof all [sons] have been made partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons" (v. 8). Elsewhere the same writer affirms that Christ, "being a son, learned [= was taught] obedience from the things which He suffered" (v. 8), that He was "perfected through sufferings" (ii. 10), that He is able to sympathise with our infirmities, having been tried and trained through suffering in all respects like as we are (iv. 15), and more to the same effect; indeed, throughout the Epistle to the Hebrews, the castigatory aspect of Christ's sufferings is much more prominent than the merely penal aspect.\* Nor is the case materially different in the other New Testament writings. The baptism of Jesus symbolised the putting off of the body of His flesh, and this was done through death (Col. ii. 11, 12), He was crucified, in order that the body of sin might be brought to nought, that so He might no more be enslaved to sin, precisely as each believer is (Rom. vi. 8-10). He became *obedient* even unto death, yea, the death of the cross (Phil. ii. 8). But it is needless to argue a point so clear.

The truth is, that the sufferings and death of believers are everywhere represented as absolutely identical in nature with those of Christ; both alike are manifestations of the righteous

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\* How nearly identical the two notions of punishment and chastisement are both in Greek and in English is shown by the fact that the words *κόλασις* and *punishment* are constantly employed where the words *παιδεία* and *chastisement* would suit equally well. No better example of chastisement could be found than ordinary school discipline. Yet schoolmasters invariably use the word *punish*, in preference to *chastise*, to describe their disciplinary operations. Does any one accuse them of solecising in so doing?

judgment of God against sin ; both alike constitute the penalty of the law ; and both alike have the effect of destroying sin, of producing repentance, of proving faith, of perfecting the person in holy obedience. And it were strange if it were otherwise. How passing strange would it be, if the nature of a man's sufferings were not only changed but revolutionised in consequence of his exercising faith on Christ—if they were one thing before faith in Christ, and another entirely distinct, and as it were opposite, thing after faith in Christ ! The notion is evidently preposterous. And theologians, while obliged by the exigencies of theory to adopt and defend it, never maintain it consistently, but desert it in favour of the Scriptural and common-sense view the moment their opponent's back has been turned. Save when directly occupied in parrying objections to the doctrine of strict substitution, they not only admit, but assume as self-evident to every reader of the Bible, that God has *punished* His saints in all ages more or less on account of their sins. And if every believer suffers and dies in his own person on account of sin, it is absurd to allege that the sufferings and death of Christ were strictly substituted for those that are actually undergone by each believer.

But what of the current notion that the absolute forgiveness of sin is impossible under the moral government of God ? Is there not a certain definite amount of suffering corresponding to every amount of sin, and must not this exact amount of suffering be inflicted infallibly, either on the sinner himself, or on a substitute provided and accepted by God ? Surely, you will say, it cannot be pretended that the sufferings and death of each believer, allowing them to be penal, are a full and adequate punishment for all his sins ? And if not a full and adequate punishment, what becomes of the stern unchangeableness of the Divine law ? Besides, what of the great inequalities in respect to suffering experienced by different believers ? Can it be maintained that these correspond to inequalities in respect to sin, and that the greatest sinner is always the greatest sufferer ? Surely not. And what of the amount of suffering that Christ underwent ? Did this correspond to a certain definite amount of sin, and if so, what amount, relatively, if not absolutely ?

Before any of these questions can be approached impartially, the reader must dismiss from his mind all unwarranted prepossessions. In particular, he must dismiss the idea that sin and suffering can be weighed and measured over against each other, and that we can fix upon a certain definite amount of suffering, and say of it that it constitutes a full and adequate punishment for this or that amount of sin. We have already had occasion to observe that sin from its very nature, and irrespective of its amount, must separate for ever between the sinner and God, unless it is taken out of the way, that it must therefore involve, on the part of the sinner, eternal or infinite suffering. The wages of sin as such is death—eternal death. The only thing therefore that can render the punishment of even a single sin less than infinite, is the doing away of the sin itself. And since God may step in and sanctify an individual at any stage of his history, and in any length of time, however limited, the whole idea of *adequate* punishment in order to remission of sins is seen to be quite chimerical. Adequate punishment of even a single sin involves a plain contradiction, for it implies that the infinite has become finite. Not even the sins of the lost in the pit of woe, will ever be adequately punished. It is evident, therefore, that God must pass over sin without adequate punishment in the case of *every* sinner whose sins have been done away; and it would manifestly be out of the question to think of assigning any limit to His so doing; all we can say is (and we are warranted in saying this, simply by observing the order of things as we find it in history and experience), that the amount of suffering undergone by forgiven sinners, bears no definite proportion whatever to the amount of their sin, which means that God may forgive absolutely, and pass over sin to an indefinable extent.

Coming to the case of Christ, I am not aware that the Scripture writers take any account, either of the amount of sin which He assumed, or of the amount of suffering which He underwent. The mere fact that He assumed human flesh, that He became sinful at all, was enough to render Him amenable to any amount of suffering that God might see fit to inflict, and to account for all the suffering which He actually endured.

It is the qualitative, not the quantitative aspect of sin that alone comes into view in the case of Christ. When the New Testament writers refer to the sin which Christ took upon Him by the act of the incarnation, they speak of it simply as "sin" (2 Cor. v. 21; Rom. vi. 6, 10; viii. 3), or as "our sins" (Rom. iv. 25; 1 Pet. ii. 24),\* or in other equivalent terms. The latter expression, which is used especially in connection with the phraseology of sacrifice, has simply been

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\* With reference to this last passage, it ought to be noted that the form of the language has evidently been influenced by Isaiah liii. 4, 5, 12 (LXX.). Yet it would be a grave error to assume, as theologians are in the habit of doing, that the apostle must necessarily have used the words which he borrowed in the same identical sense in which they were used by the Old Testament prophet. The fact is, that the meaning of the expression "bore our sins," is obviously quite different in 1 Pet. ii. 24, from what it is in Isaiah liii. 12, and necessarily so from the nature of the case to which it is here applied. This is proved not only by the following clause "in His body *up to the tree*," (*ἐπὶ τὸ ξύλον*) which positively will not bear the sense "by means of His body, [tortured as it was] *upon* the tree,"—as if the sins of all mankind, had been imputed to the *body* of Christ, and the suffering undergone by it *alone* (!)—but by the whole context, which points to the destruction of the principle of sin inherent in the flesh, first in the case of Christ through His death, and then in the case of each believer through death on his part after the example of Christ. "The sins" which Christ "bore," and "the sins" to which we "have died," in order that we might live unto righteousness, are manifestly identical; but they can be identical only in the sense that the principle of sin inherent in Christ's flesh, which stood in the way of His living to righteousness, was identical naturally and organically with the principle of sin inherent in our flesh, which stands in the way of our living to righteousness—this principle of sin being that which was brought to nought through the death of Christ, as it is that which shall be brought to nought through our death after the example of Christ (*cf.* Rom. vi. 1-11). No doubt, under these circumstances, we should expect simply "sin," or at the most "our sin," instead of "our sins," to describe the thing which Christ "carried in His body up to the tree," and to which we die after His example. And so in all likelihood the apostle would have expressed himself, had he been framing language suited precisely to convey his thought. So at least the Apostle Paul most commonly expresses himself (*cf.* Rom. viii. 10, 11, where the equivalent literal form of language will be found). But inasmuch as the Apostle Peter, instead of framing language of his own, elected to borrow language from Isaiah liii., where the phrase *τὰς ἀμαρτίας αὐτῶν* occurs repeatedly, the lack of precision in his phraseology ought not to cause us any surprise, seeing that the same phenomenon is of frequent occurrence elsewhere.

Elsewhere do we say? The same phenomenon is found in the phrase "delivered up because of our trespasses," of Rom. iv. 25, cited immediately before, the form of which has likewise been determined by Isaiah liii. 12, as rendered by the LXX., and which must be interpreted in exactly the same way (*cf.* again Rom. viii. 10, 11, for the corresponding proper form of expression).



taken over from the Old Testament, and being diverted from its original reference, must, when applied to the sin attaching to Christ's person, be understood in a somewhat qualified sense, since it is quite impossible that it should bear an absolutely literal one. The sins of one half of the human race—which is what is referred to by “our”—had already in Scripture phrase been “brought to nought,” so far as they ever will be brought to nought, before the death of Christ took place; while the sins of the other half had not yet come into existence; so that Christ could not possibly have carried “our sins” in the proper literal sense “in His body up to the tree.” Thus far all must concur. The only question, therefore, is in what precise *qualified* sense Christ was “delivered up because of our trespasses,” in what *qualified* sense He “carried our sins in His body up to the tree.” The answer of theologians is that He took our sins *by imputation*. And those who make any pretence of adhering to grammatical principle, do not shrink from holding that He “carried our sins [imputed] *in His body* (!) up to the tree.” But we have already shown that the imputation of sin from one person to another, and particularly from us to Christ, is a pure fiction of the imagination, absolutely devoid of Scripture authority; and a very unintelligible one to boot; one that involves manifold contradictions and absurdities within itself. My answer is that Christ “carried our sins in His body up to the tree,” in the manner and to the extent that sin, the characteristic of the nature common to us and Him, existed as a pervading principle in His body to carry; that He “was delivered up because of our trespasses,” in the sense that, having been born of a woman, He was born under the penalty of the law, and so had to endure that penalty; that He took our sins by taking our nature, sinful as it was and is; that He became sin by becoming flesh; and put away sin in that He put away the body of sin, the flesh in which sin inhered. Now it were obviously idle to ask what amount of sin dwells in human flesh as such, what amount of sin each of us brings into the world with us, or what amount Christ brought into the world with him. Such questions, even if answerable, would have no manner of interest. They have no bearing

upon anything. Probably they never so much as occurred to any of the Scripture writers. And it is equally idle to ask what was the amount of suffering which Christ underwent during His life and at His death. As well might one ask what amount of suffering each believer undergoes during his life and at his death. As well might one ask what amount of enjoyment Christ and Christians have during their earthly life, and throughout eternity. It is just as legitimate to ask what is the amount of the reward, the promise attached to the law, during a given period, as it is to ask what is the amount of the penalty, the threatening attached to the law, during a given period. The sufferings of Christ, whatever their amount, had no manner of relation to the amount of sin which He assumed, whatever that amount may have been, they were in no sort the adequate penalty of that, or of any other amount of sin. That the sufferings and death of Christ were not infinite, any more than those of other believers, is sufficiently proved by the fact that they were not eternal, and, being simply limited sufferings, sufferings limited like those of each believer by temporal or bodily death, they could not possibly exhaust the penalty of even a single sin. If we accept the teaching of the Apostle Paul (Rom. v. 12, *seq.*), we must hold that a single sin is sufficient to cause the eternal death, not merely of a single individual, but of an indefinite number of individuals, even of the whole race of Adam. A single sin, therefore, would have been quite sufficient, nay, would have been much more than sufficient, to bring about all the sufferings of Christ, be they so great as ever they will; so that even if sin could be weighed and measured, and we were acquainted with the precise weight and measurement of the sin assumed by Christ, this would afford us no clue to the precise amount of His sufferings.

Accordingly, we find that when the Scripture writers refer to the sufferings of Christ, they never hint at any proportion existing between them and the amount of human sin, whether the sin directly connected with His own person, or the sin connected with the persons of believers, or the sin connected with the persons of all men, whether believers or not. They declare that in Christ's death as in ours, the body

of sin was brought to nought (Rom. vi. 3), God having condemned to death, and brought to nought through death, the sin in the flesh (viii. 3); but they make no mention of any definite or indefinite degree of suffering, which had to be undergone before the sin in the flesh could be brought to nought. The death of Christ was just the ordinary human experience that passes under that name. Says the Apostle Paul, "For while we were yet weak, in due time Christ *died* for the ungodly; for scarcely for a righteous man will one *die*; for peradventure for the good man, some would even dare to *die*; but God commendeth His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ *died* for us" (Rom. v. 6-8)—where it would surely be very strange and misleading, if the word *die* had one meaning in the first and last cases, and quite another meaning in the two intermediate cases. In fact, I believe that had the apostles been asked what was the amount of the sufferings of Christ, they would have been just as unable to tell as we ourselves are. Their point of view, as regards the matter, is simply the historical one. They knew that Christ lived on earth for so many years; that He suffered more or less during all these years, bodily as well as mentally—the latter, it may be, chiefly in connection with the sin, unbelief, and misery of men; that He was visited by peculiar fits of mental depression and anguish, particularly when circumstances suggested the thought of His own departure from the world (John xii. 27, *seq.*); that the greatest, most awful, and most mysterious of these fits was experienced in the garden of Gethsemane on the night of His betrayal; and finally, that He underwent the cruel, agonising, and accursed death of the cross. These are the broad facts which are patent to every reader of the gospel narratives, and there is no evidence that the apostles ever went beyond them, or even that the thought of attempting to do so ever so much as occurred to them. The idea that every sin has its exact equivalent punishment, which the law, otherwise the retributive justice of God, demands inexorably, and that Christ paid such equivalent punishment, or paid what was accepted instead of equivalent punishment, for all human sin, this idea, the fruit of pure scholastic construction, based on arbitrary

and unwarrantable moral principles, is not only without the smallest real evidence, but is plainly excluded by the nature of the case, as well as by numerous express declarations of Scripture. The apostles teach nothing as to the amount of Christ's sufferings, beyond what is contained in their historical narrations: what they teach as to their purpose and effect, is something quite different from the scholastic figment of adequate satisfaction to Divine justice for all human sin.

The substance of what is taught by the author of Hebrews, has been already before us, and may be gathered from the statement that "it became Him [was a righteous thing for Him (2 Thess. i. 6; 1 Pet. ii. 23)], for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, when many sons were led to glory, to perfect the leader of their salvation through sufferings" (ii. 10). Why, or in what view it became God to perfect Christ through sufferings, will appear by combining the above statement with the passage from which our present discussion took its rise, and which we are now in a position finally to dispose of. "There is no distinction [between Jew and Greek]; for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace [which enables to endure affliction, suffering, death to sin, while doing well: cf. v. 2, "through whom also we have had our access by faith into *this* grace, whereby we stand fast (amid trial, Phil. i. 27), and rejoice in hope of the glory of God (the reward of endurance while doing well, ii. 7; 1 Peter i. 7)], through the redemption [from slavery to sin, by death to sin (vi. 2, seq.; viii. 23; Eph. i. 7, 14)], that is in Christ Jesus [=in Christ Jesus' *nature* (vi. 3, 5; 1 Cor. xv. 22; 2 Cor. v. 17)], whom God set forth to be a means of expiation \* [=redemp-

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\* Here again the language is not only borrowed, as in iv. 25, but typico-figurative; very different, therefore, as to its form from the ideas which it is used to convey; and hence more than ordinary caution is needed in the interpretation of it. The fact that Christ alone is spoken of as "an expiatory sacrifice," undoubtedly suggests that His sufferings alone afford "a manifest token" of the righteous judgment of God, just as the "our" in the second member of iv. 25, which is framed to correspond with the "our" of the first member, and is therefore simply an echo of the "we," "our," &c., of Isaiah liii., suggests that the justification of the whole world took place at the moment of Christ's death (as Ritschl actually holds that it did). But that this cannot be the case, is shown conclusively both



tion from, or remission of sins (Eph. i. 7)], through faith [as the subjective means (1 Peter i. 2 ; Heb. x. 19, 22) of putting men] in his blood [=in his death as a slave to sin (Rom. vi. 2-4)—*i.e.*, in the likeness of His death as a slave to sin (vv. 5-7 ; *cf.* v. 9)—sprinkling with the blood of Christ, or death identical with Christ's, being the medium through which men are put into Christ Jesus (vi. 2. 3 ; Eph. ii. 13), in whom, being redeemed from slavery to sin (Eph. i. 7 ; 1 Peter i. 18, 19, 22), they have been justified (Rom. vi. 7 ; viii. 1, &c.)], aiming [in this method of expiation through death to sin by

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by the words which follow, and by various parallel passages (*cf.* those cited pp. 443-449, especially Phil. i. 28, 29 ; 2 Thess. i. 5, *seq.*) ; indeed, by the whole tenor of Scripture, and almost, one might say, by actual experience and observation. It is usual to construe the words "whom God set forth as an expiatory sacrifice through faith in His blood," in one or other of two ways : either (1) connecting "in His blood" with "faith,"—the blood of Christ being regarded as the object on which faith rests ; or (2) connecting "in His blood" with "whom"—the clause being regarded as one of nearer definition, describing the state in which Christ was set forth as an expiatory sacrifice. But neither of these views can be accepted as satisfactory. The first cannot ; for the idea that faith has for its object the blood of Christ, if not exactly absurd, is at least entirely foreign to the New Testament, as a reference to the passages where the blood of Christ is spoken of will show. And the second cannot ; for besides that "in His blood," ought in that case to have been placed before, "through faith," a glance at the parallel occurrences of the same, or a similar expression will convince any one that "in His blood," describes the element in which the believer is "through faith," not the element in which Christ was set forth as an expiatory sacrifice. For example, at v. 9 we are said to "have been justified *in His blood*," which proves that as faith is the means of justifying us, so it must be the means of placing us "in His blood," in which "we have our redemption through His blood" (Eph. i. 7), and through our redemption thus obtained our justification (Rom. iii. 24). With this agrees the statement of the author of Hebrews, that believers have their "hearts sprinkled" through faith, and are thus prepared for entering the holy place "in the blood of Jesus" (x. 19, 22). Thus "in His blood" (Rom. iii. 25), is in its natural and proper place, after, and not before "through faith." All the more clearly, however, does it appear from this expression, that the sufferings of each believer, equally with those of Christ, afford "a manifest token" of the righteous judgment of God ; for when translated into literal terms "in His blood through faith," can mean nothing else than "in death with Him through faith," which implies that the death of each believer bears exactly the same relation to the justice of God as the death of Christ. Yet the apostle did not call each believer "an expiatory sacrifice." And why ? Because that would have been to depart entirely from the form of the Old Testament type, which furnished the linguistic mould in which his ideas are here expressed. Believers must stand for "the people," on whose behalf the sacrifice is offered, and this forbids their being spoken of each as "an expiatory sacrifice."

faith] at giving a manifest token (*ἐνδειξίς*; *cf.* Phil. i. 28; 2 Thess. i. 5) of His righteousness [=righteous judgment (*δικαιοκρισίας*, Rom. ii. 5; *τῆς δικαίας κρίσεως*, 2 Thess. i. 5)], because of the passing over [without retribution (Rom. ii. 6-8)], of the sins committed before [faith (v. 25), or repentance (ii. 4)], during the [time of] the forbearance of God [when the wrath against sin was neither pacified by repentance and the remission of the sin, nor manifested (ix. 22), or given effect to in the form of punishment, but simply treasured up against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God (ii. 5)], aiming, I say, at the giving of a manifest token of His righteousness during the present time [=the time of faith (v. 25), of repentance (ii. 4), of endurance while doing well (v. 7), of sufferings (viii. 18), of proving faith (1 Pet. i. 6, 7), of judgment having begun at the house of God (iv. 17)], to the end that He might be Himself righteous [=the righteous judge (2 Tim. iv. 8), Him that judgeth righteously (1 Pet. ii. 23), the Father who without respect of persons judgeth according to each man's work (i. 17)—requiting suffering to the sinful, and glory to the righteous (Rom. ii. 7-10), beginning with believers, the house of God, and ending with the ungodly and the sinner (1 Pet. iv. 17; 2 Thess. i. 5, *seq.*)], while justifying Him that is [righteous] by faith in Jesus [in the day when He shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ (Rom. ii. 16), the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God (v. 5), of the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven (2 Thess. i. 7), *that* day of His appearing (2 Tim. iv. 8), the appointed day in which He shall judge the world *in righteousness* by that man whom He hath ordained (Acts xvii. 31)]” (Rom. iii. 23-6).

Neither have these verses anything whatever to do with adequate, by which is meant infinite, satisfaction to Divine justice on account of the mass of human sin. What they teach is something quite different, and, in some respects, directly opposed to such an idea. They assert that in consequence of the passing over of believers' sins in the past, there is needed (what actually takes place) a signal manifestation of the Divine retributive justice on Christ and believers in the present, in order that that justice may be acknowledged

when Christ and believers come to be acquitted and rewarded, while the ungodly are condemned and punished, at the future day of judgment. This signal manifestation of the Divine retributive justice is seen, on the one hand, and in its principle, in the sufferings and death of Christ; on the other hand, and in its detail, in the sufferings and death of all believers after the example and in the spirit of Christ. And the just or equitable retribution thus begun at the house of God is carried out and completed when the ungodly, whose sins have *not* been passed over, are punished with everlasting destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of His might, at the same time that Christ and believers are crowned with glory and honour on account of their endurance of suffering and death while doing well (2 Thess. i. 6, 7; 1 Pet. iv. 13, 17; Rom. ii. 4-16). Will any one pretend that the temporal sufferings and death of each believer are infinite? or that they are a full and adequate punishment for all his sins? or that no part of the penalty of any believer's sins is really and truly remitted? If not, it is impossible to pretend any such things of the temporal sufferings and death of Christ. The sufferings of Christ and the sufferings of believers serve equally to manifest the Divine justice; but is it necessary, in order to this, that they should be infinite, or equal in amount to the eternal sufferings of the lost in the pit of woe? The sins of the two thieves on the cross may be supposed, without much risk of error, to have been of equal amount: were the two or three hours of suffering undergone by the penitent thief equal in amount to the eternal suffering of the impenitent? Surely not. Yet such they must have been if the righteous judgment of God can be manifested only by exacting the full punishment of every sin. If the sins committed by the two thieves during the time of God's forbearance were practically the same, the full punishment due to both must likewise have been practically the same; yet the punishment of the one was temporal, the punishment of the other eternal; the reason being that the sins of the one were *passed over*, and *not visited with full punishment*; while the sins of the other were *not passed over*, but *visited with full punishment*.

In point of fact, so far are the sufferings of each believer from being infinite and the adequate penalty of his sins, that the Apostle Paul could say, "I reckon that the sufferings of the present time [whereby the righteous judgment of God is manifested (Rom. iii. 26 ; 1 Pet. iv. 13, 17 ; Phil. i. 28, 29 ; 2 Thess. i. 4, 5)] are *not worthy to be compared* with the glory that shall be revealed to us-ward [the adequate and infinite *reward* of obedience (2 Tim. iv. 8)]." (Rom. viii. 18). "Our *momentary light burden* of affliction worketh for us more and more exceedingly an *eternal heavy burden* of glory" (2 Cor. iv. 17). How entirely incompatible are such statements as these with the idea that the sufferings of believers amount to the full penalty which the law threatens against sin ! They show, on the contrary, that while the temporal sufferings of believers are just as real a manifestation of the righteous judgment of God as were the temporal sufferings of Christ, and while, in their case as in His, they are the means of perfecting the persons by whom they are undergone, they are so far from being infinite in degree, that they are utterly insignificant as compared with the infinite glories that shall follow them. The degree of suffering in every case is, in fact, just the historical one, which meets all the requirements of the Divine government, and there is nowhere any thought of balancing suffering over against sin, so as to wipe out its penalty, either in the case of Christ or in that of believers. The Scripture writers (for this applies to the Old Testament prophets not less than to the New Testament apostles) confine themselves to interpreting the meaning of sufferings known from history to exist ; they do not speculate, nor deduce the particular amount of these sufferings from *à priori* ideas touching the nature and exigencies of the Divine justice. According to them, the exigencies of the Divine justice are to be learned from what the Divine justice *actually does*, not from what they or any one else may imagine it *ought to do*.

Scholastic theologians, on the other hand, indulging their favourite taste for *à priori* speculation, pursue a method as nearly as possible the reverse of this. They begin by assuming that forgiveness of sins in the ordinary sense of the phrase



is impossible, being inconsistent with the Divine character and government, which demands that every sin shall somehow be visited with its exact equivalent punishment. Hence, when the apostle speaks of "the passing over of the sins done aforetime in the forbearance of God," they understand by "the sins done aforetime" the aggregate sins of the whole pre-Christian world. The "passing over" they take to mean the suspension of the penalty due to these sins. And they hold that the way in which the Divine justice was manifested and vindicated was by inflicting the penalty hitherto suspended, not on those who committed the sin, but on Christ, their appointed and accepted substitute. But the difficulties attending this interpretation of the passage are insuperable. To begin with, the death of Christ would have no bearing on any sins but those of the pre-Christian world, whose penalty He bore, and the passing over of any other sins would, on the principles assumed, be impossible without violation of the Divine justice. But is it not certain that the death of Christ bears equally on all human sin? Do we not read elsewhere that "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also *for the whole world*" (1 John ii. 2)? Next, it appears undoubted that the apostle's point of view and mode of representation in the present passage is identical with that of the author of Hebrews in the body of his epistle (*cf.* especially ix. 15), and similar to that of Paul himself in Gal. iii., iv., where the entire pre-Christian world is thought of as having lived and died in a state of slavery to the law before the advent of a true atoning sacrifice in the person of Christ, and before faith as the means of appropriating the blood that "cleanseth from all sin" was or could be exercised; where "the people" on whose behalf the sacrifice of Christ is offered, and who are really sanctified by it, are identified with the apostles themselves and their Christian contemporaries; and where Old Testament religion is regarded in no other light than as a foil to set off the excellence and ideal validity of the religion which Christ came to inaugurate. And if this be so, the sins whose penalty Christ bore must, on the above interpretation, have been *exclusively* the sins of persons who were not and could not possibly be saved! Further, why should

the sins committed before Christ be singled out and spoken of as having been passed over any more than the sins after Christ? According to the unanimous testimony of the New Testament writers, the sins of Old Testament saints (if any such there were) were dealt with in exactly the same way as the sins of New Testament saints. Abraham and David obtained forgiveness of sins through faith and repentance precisely in the same way as Peter and Paul, precisely in the same way as Augustine and Luther. Under the Old Testament as under the New, there was a passing over, a remission, a non-reckoning of the sins done before faith and repentance, just as there was a bringing to nought of the sinful nature through suffering and death, whereby the righteous judgment of God was manifested. Now, if the sins of all Old Testament saints had been passed over in the sense that they had been forgiven, if their sinful nature had been done away, if the righteous judgment of God had been manifested in their sufferings and death, and if they had received the reward which it was righteous for God to bestow (Heb. vi. 10, 12), how could the full penalty of all their sins be still suspended so as to fall upon Christ? If Abraham and David were inheriting the promises and enjoying the beatific vision, where was the penalty of their sins suspended? How could God be still cherishing his anger towards them, or even towards their sins apart from them? It is idle to talk about the precise force of the word "passing over" (*πάρεσις*), as if that word applied to God's method of dealing with Old Testament sins as distinguished from New Testament sins. The word "passing over" is not the *only* word applied to the forgiveness of sins under the Old Testament. In the very next chapter the apostle uses, or at least quotes, the words "remitted," "covered," "not reckoned," to describe the forgiveness obtained by Old Testament saints, and these are the very words used to describe the forgiveness obtained by New Testament saints. He also, in the same passage, asserts that Abraham was the father of the faithful (v. 16), and the type of believers in all ages, especially of New Testament believers (vv. 23-25), and this implies that God has from the beginning accepted believers on precisely the same terms as regards for-

givenness and everything else. Again, as to forbearance—God was not more forbearing toward the sins of His people before the coming of Christ than after it. The whole plan of salvation being exactly the same in both periods, the forbearance of God was the same also, so that the Old Testament period was in no special sense the period of forbearance. There is not even a particle of truth in Lord Bacon's remark that "Prosperity was the blessing of the Old Testament, adversity is the blessing of the New"—a remark which rests on the extravagant assumption, that the laws of nature, or the principles of God's moral government, were entirely changed at the advent of Jesus Christ! That, as a general rule, Old Testament saints supposed and believed that God had in the past, and would in the future, reward righteousness and punish sin in the present life to a greater extent than He actually does under the New Testament may be readily admitted; but that God actually did reward righteousness and punish sin a whit more fully under the Old Testament than under the New is an assumption which genuine Old Testament history completely disproves, and the falsity of which Old Testament saints themselves came latterly at least to perceive. Once more, the apostle's statement is that Christ was "set forth as an expiatory sacrifice *through faith* in His blood." But if the sins expiated through the death of Christ were merely pre-Christian sins, which had up to that time been passed over, then the expiation effected through the death of Christ could in no sort depend on faith, could not therefore be an expiation "through faith in His blood." Indeed, the mention of "faith in His blood" (however we may choose to construe the latter phrase) as the means by which expiation is obtained in individual cases *after* the expiatory sacrifice has been "set forth"—for that is evidently what is meant—points to the curious result, that whereas the sins held to have been expiated by the death of Christ are exclusively Old Testament sins, the persons who actually obtain the expiation are exclusively New Testament persons! More than that: since faith is the means of obtaining expiation, this is a proof that expiation must take place wherever and whenever there is faith; that is to say, expiation must have taken place from the time of Abel downwards

—a fact which quite explodes the notion that all pre-Christian sins were passed over unexpiated till the time of Christ, when they were expiated by Him personally *in toto*. Finally—to return to the point from which we started—it may be taken as self-evident that the death of Christ, if it bear at all, should bear equally on the sins of the whole human race, whether pre- or post-Christian, and that the righteousness of God should require to be manifested equally with reference to the passing over of all human sin that is passed over, whether before or after the death of Christ. Any exegetical theory that does not conserve these conditions must be regarded as transparently erroneous and untenable.

The true explanation of the words is that which has been already indicated. The “sins committed aforetime,” are the sins committed by believers before faith in Christ, and these comprehend practically all the overt sins of believers, for the believer is here thought of as being what he ought to be, a perfect follower of Christ, who did no sin (1 Pet. ii. 22). “When [=aforetime] we were in the flesh,” says the Apostle, “the sinful passions which were through the law, wrought in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now [=in the present time], we [as to our flesh], have been brought to nought from the law, having died to that wherein we were held, so that we [as to our spirit] serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter” (Rom. vii. 5, 6). “Before faith came [=aforetime], we were guarded under the law [by which came the knowledge of sin]; but now [=in the present time] that faith is come, we are no longer under a tutor [having no need of law repression]; for ye are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus” (Gal. iii. 23-26). “And you, when [=aforetime] ye were dead through your trespasses and sins—wherein *aforetime* ye walked according to . . . the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience—among whom we also all had our conversation *aforetime*, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest :—when we were dead through our trespasses, God, who is rich in mercy . . . quickened us together with Christ [having forgiven us all our trespasses (Col. ii. 13)], and



raised us up with Him, and made us to sit with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, [so that] . . . now [=in the present time], ye that *aforetime* were far off, are made nigh *in the blood of Christ*" (Eph. ii. 1-6, 13). "And you, when [=aforetime] ye were dead through your trespasses, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, did He quicken together with Him, *having forgiven us all our trespasses* . . . mortify therefore [in the present time] your members which are upon the earth, fornication, uncleanness, &c., . . . because of which things the wrath of God cometh upon the sons of disobedience, among whom also ye walked *aforetime*, when ye lived in these things. But now [=in the present time] put ye away also all these, anger, wrath, &c., . . . seeing ye have put off the old man with his doings" (Col. ii. 13; iii. 5-9). "We thus judge that one died on behalf of all, therefore all [with Him by faith and baptism (Col. ii. 11, 12)] died; and He died on behalf of all, in order that they which live [in the present time], should no longer [as aforetime] live unto themselves, but unto Him who died on their behalf, and rose again . . . And all things are [now] of God, that reconciled us to Himself, through Christ . . . *not reckoning unto the [reconciled] their trespasses*" (2 Cor. v. 14-19). "As children of obedience, not fashioning yourselves according to your former [=aforetime] lusts, in the time of your ignorance, but like as He which called you is holy, so be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of conversation. . . . Pass the time of your sojourning [=the present time] in fear; knowing that ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, from your vain conversation, handed down by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ" (1 Pet. i. 14-19). "He that hath suffered in the flesh, hath ceased from sin, that ye no longer should live the rest of your time in the flesh, [=the present time] to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. For the time past [=aforetime], may suffice to have wrought the will of the Gentiles . . . who shall render account to Him that is ready to judge the living and the dead; for to this end was the Gospel preached to the dead also [as well as to the living], in order that, though (*μὲν*), they had been judged [=condemned], after the manner of men in the

flesh [*scil.* by suffering temporal death], they might nevertheless (*δὲ*) live [having been justified through accepting the Gospel] after the manner of God in the spirit" (1 Pet. iv. 1-6; *cf.* 1 Tim. iii. 16). These quotations may suffice to show what is the period to which the Apostle refers, when He speaks of the passing over of the sins afore committed in the time of the forbearance of God.

There are, in fact, three great stages in the history of ordinary believers. The first is the period anterior to faith, the period when they are slaves of sin, sons of disobedience, children of wrath, when they are in the flesh, and live after the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind—presenting their members as instruments to uncleanness, and to iniquity unto iniquity—bringing forth fruit unto death. In one word, therefore, this is the period when sin is committed. It is also the period of God's forbearance, when sin is practically left unpunished. It corresponds to the whole earthly life of the unbeliever, with respect to whom the Apostle asks, "Reckonest thou this, O man, . . . that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of His goodness, and *forbearance*, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? but after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up for thyself wrath in the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man, according to his works" (Rom. ii. 3-6). These words entirely refute the opinion entertained by some writers, that sin is its own punishment, that the penalty follows instantly and inevitably on the transgression, and that such a thing as an accumulation of penalties is impossible. They prove, on the contrary, that through the Divine forbearance, the evil works of sinful men may be left unpunished for a lengthened period, while yet the penalties are not remitted, but treasured up against a final day of reckoning. And what is true of the finally impenitent, is equally true of believers, up to the first moment of faith. In their case, also, there is a period during which evil works are practised, forbearance is shown, retribution is left over, and penalties are accumulated against a time, not of reckoning, but of repentance and remission.

The second period of the believer's history is that which begins with the first moment of faith, and extends to the final judgment. In its ideal state, this is a period when no sin is committed, when believers are engaged always and only in doing well, when they are the slaves of righteousness, the sons of God, when they are in the Spirit and live after the Spirit, minding the things of the Spirit, presenting their members as instruments to righteousness, having their fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. And if the former period corresponded to the whole earthly life of the unbeliever, this period corresponds to the whole earthly life of Christ. It is spoken of as the present time, the time of sojourning upon earth, the remaining time in the flesh, the time when the judgment has begun at the house of God. Two things are to be noted in connection with this period. The first is that the sins committed in the former period are *passed over* definitively—that is, they are graciously forgiven (Col. ii. 13), they are not reckoned unto believers (2 Cor. v. 19). Nor is this passing over any mere suspension of the penalty until a time of reckoning come. It is forgiveness pure and simple, forgiveness springing from compassion, kindness, love, mercy, forgiveness identical with that which one tender-hearted man bestows upon another (Eph. iv. 32; Col. iii. 13; Luke vii. 47-50, &c.). Ideally, forgiveness is a single act, taking place in the first moment of faith and repentance, when the bond standing against the sinner on account of his past life is cancelled; but if sin is repeated subsequent to faith, as it invariably is, forgiveness must, of course, be repeated also (Matt. vi. 12, *seq.*; 1 John i. 9). The second thing to be noted is that, *in consequence* of the forgiveness which believers have received for all their past sins, whereby the wrath treasured up, the guilt accumulated, during their whole previous life has been completely wiped out and forgotten, there is needed some signal manifestation (*ἔνδειξις*) of the righteous judgment of God toward them on account of present sinfulness, some punitive retribution answering to that which shall be awarded to the ungodly at the final judgment, when believers shall be justified and rewarded on account of the righteousness which they shall then possess. If God, at the final judgment, is to appear as a

righteous Judge, rendering to every man—believers and unbelievers alike—according to his works, then He must not only condemn and punish the ungodly on account of sin, while justifying and rewarding believers on account of righteousness, in that day; but He must, at some time, and in some manner, give a palpable indication of His impartiality, by in some sort condemning and punishing believers on account of sin. This palpable indication of God's righteous judgment is given "in the present time," by inflicting temporal sufferings and death, first on Christ as leader of salvation and head of the house of God, and then on all believers as followers of Christ and members of the house of God. "The present time," accordingly, is "the time when the judgment [= 'the righteous judgment of God who shall render to every man according to his works' (Rom. ii. 5, 6)] has begun at the house of God" (1 Pet. iv. 17). It corresponds, on the one hand, to the whole earthly life of Christ, being the time of His humiliation, sufferings, and death (Phil. ii. 5-8), and, on the other hand, to the whole earthly life of the believer as a believer, being likewise in his case a time of humiliation, sufferings, and death (Rom. viii. 18, *seq.*; 1 Pet. iv. 12, *seq.*). It is also the time of redemption from the power and dominion of sin, a process which was accomplished for Christ by death in subjection to sin, as it is accomplished for each believer by similar death in subjection to sin. In both cases the cause of death and the effect of death are exactly the same. In the case of believers, not less or more than in the case of Christ, death is a judicial penalty, inflicted by God in His capacity as a righteous judge, so that its effect is to manifest the righteous judgment of God (2 Thess. i. 5). Not, however, as if each believer suffered the full and adequate penalty of all his sins; still less as if the full penalty of all the believer's sins were transferred to Christ and borne by Him: it is expressly asserted that the believer's sins are graciously forgiven (Col. ii. 13), passed over (Rom. iii. 25), that they are not reckoned to him (2 Cor. v. 19), or to any one else; and it is precisely *because* they have been thus forgiven that there is needed a special manifestation of the Divine judgment in the case of Christ, supplemented by a similar manifestation in the case of each believer. I say a



*special* manifestation in the case of Christ. For in one respect the case of Christ differs somewhat from that of all His followers. Christ Himself had no sins committed aforetime requiring to be passed over, He had merely that sin in the flesh which He assumed in order to accomplish human redemption, and which God condemned and brought to nought through death (Rom. viii. 3). Hence, in so far as the sufferings of Christ and of believers reflect back on the Divine procedure in forgiving human sin, the sufferings of Christ (whatever may be thought of those of believers) have an equal reference to *all* human sin forgiven, to the sins of *all* the many sons that are led to glory. This fact gives the death of Christ a central and universal significance in the way of manifesting the Divine righteousness that does not perhaps belong to the death of each believer; and this, together with the circumstance that it is, or at least is regarded as being, the primary and ruling case, accounts for the central place that is everywhere assigned to it. All the more clearly, however, does it appear from the case of Christ that human sin is really forgiven, and that the manifestation of God's righteousness does not take place by simply enforcing the full penalties that men have incurred. For if, as is quite obvious and as all must allow, the manifestation of the Divine righteousness does not require that the full penalty should be inflicted on each believer on account of sins which are really his, but rather permits of "the passing over of the sins committed aforetime," with what show of reason can it be maintained that the manifestation of that righteousness requires that the full penalty should be inflicted on Christ on account of sins which are not really His, sins which He did not commit, and with which He never had any connection? No, the justice of God and the forgiveness of human sin are not incompatible in any absolute sense. They are incompatible only to this extent that men who are found wearing flesh and blood, saints or well-doers though they be, must suffer and die before they can reach the perfected glorified state. That Christ and believers do actually suffer and die in the path of well-doing is an historical fact patent to all, and this is the explanation of it, or which the apostles put upon it. By this means the righteousness of God is manifested. By this means

it is made possible for God, "judging without respect of persons according to each man's work" (1 Pet. i. 17), to award eternal glory to the righteous, while awarding eternal destruction to them that obey not the truth but obey unrighteousness. Neither in the case of Christ, nor in that of the believer, is there any thought of estimating the amount of suffering undergone. The amount differs in each individual case, and is to be known from history only. The apostle is not even speculating on the abstract necessity of suffering at all. He is still further from speculating on the abstract necessity of the incarnation in order to suffering. He is simply interpreting the meaning of sufferings whose existence history itself proclaims. And the sum of what he teaches concerning Christian suffering is: (1) as to its nature, it is a penal infliction, and is, in that view of it, a manifestation of the righteous judgment of God on account of sin attaching to the parties suffering; (2) as to its effect (*a*) it destroys the principle of sin inherent in the flesh, (*b*) it causes God to appear righteous in justifying and glorifying Christ and believers on account of righteousness at the day of judgment, *in spite of the fact that the mass of believers' sins have been passed over and pardoned.*

The third period of the believer's history is that which sets in at the final *judgment*, when he is finally and completely *justified*. And here again the believer is treated exactly as Christ was treated, but in a manner directly opposite to that in which the ungodly are treated. Christ was justified in the Spirit (1 Tim. iii. 16); He was crowned with glory and honour on account of the suffering of death (Heb. ii. 9); He became obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross, and therefore God highly exalted Him (Phil. ii. 8, 9); He endured the cross, despising the shame, and, in consequence, sat down at the right hand of the throne of God (Heb. xii. 2). The believer, in like manner, having been a doer and not a mere hearer of the law, shall be justified in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ (Rom. ii. 13, 16); having by patient continuance in well-doing sought for glory and honour and incorruption, he shall receive eternal life, and this by the righteous judgment of God, who will

render to every man according to his works (ii. 5-10)—who without respect of persons will judge according to each man's work (1 Pet. i. 17)—when all shall be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in his body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad (2 Cor. v. 10); having suffered with Christ, he shall be glorified (Rom. viii. 17), and shall reign (2 Tim. ii. 11, 12) with Him; having ministered to Christ, by ministering to His brethren, he shall be called to enter into life eternal (Matt. xxv. 34-40, 46); he shall be counted worthy of the kingdom of God for which he also suffered, it being a righteous thing with God to recompense rest or peace (Rom. ii. 10) at the revelation of Jesus Christ to them that have been afflicted for the kingdom of heaven's sake (2 Thess. i. 5-7); having finished his course and kept the faith, he shall receive as his prize the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give him at that day (2 Tim. iv. 7, 8). Thus, and not otherwise, it is that God will be "Himself righteous, while justifying him that is righteous by faith in Jesus" (Rom. iii. 26).

On the other hand, the ungodly, though they have already so far met the judgment of God in suffering temporal death (1 Pet. iv. 6), just as the righteous have already so far received their justification and their reward (Rom. v. 1, *seq.*); yet, since their transgressions are still unforgiven, besides being greatly aggravated by persistent disobedience to the truth; since they are still impenitent, the goodness of God not having led them to repentance; since they have used the forbearance of God merely to treasure up wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of His righteous judgment: therefore they shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might (2 Thes. i. 9), being visited with wrath and indignation, tribulation and anguish (Rom. ii. 9); having denied Christ before men, failing to take up their cross and follow Him, they shall be denied by Him before the angels of God (Matt. x. 33, 38; 2 Tim. ii. 12); not having ministered to Christ by ministering to His brethren (Matt. xxv. 41-45), nor suffered for the kingdom of heaven's sake (v. 10-14), they shall go away into everlasting punish-

ment (xxv. 46); this shall be the end of them that obey not the Gospel of God (1 Pet. iv. 17), when they give their account to Him that is ready to judge the living and the dead (iv. 5). In this way shall God manifest (*ἐνδείκνυσθαι*) His wrath, and make known His power, on vessels of wrath fitted to destruction (Rom. ix. 22; *cf.* Phil. i. 28), while making known the riches of His glory on vessels of mercy which He aforetime prepared unto glory.

Thus, on the whole, it appears that the forgiveness of sins is a reality, otherwise no flesh could be saved; that God at the final judgment judges with strict impartiality, and without the intervention of any fictions; that men are justified and condemned according to their character as righteous or unrighteous, rewarded and punished according to their works as good or bad; that the temporal sufferings and death of Christ and of believers as believers are the expression of a preliminary judgment on the part of God; that they are of the same nature, and serve the same purpose in respect to the exigences of the Divine justice, as the eternal (including the temporal) sufferings and death of the unbelieving; that they had the effect, retrospectively viewed, of bringing into manifestation the judicial righteousness of God, which otherwise would have been obscured by His mercy in the forgiveness of human sin—prospectively viewed, they had the effect of meriting glorification for Christ and believers respectively; that, in the process of dying, the principle of sin is brought to nought, so that further commission of sin is impossible, and that in the case of believers the forgiveness of sins committed before is inseparably connected with the process of dying; that there is no such thing as transference of penalties from one party to another, as for example from believers to Christ; that there is no such thing as adequate, by which is meant infinite, punishment of any sin, whether belonging to Christ or to believers; that neither in the case of Christ nor in the case of believers is any estimate formed of the amount of suffering undergone, only it is asserted to be insignificant, and unworthy of comparison with the glory following it as a reward; that there is no just ground to suppose that the sufferings of Christ were appreciably in excess of those undergone



by at least some of His followers—rather, there are plain enough indications to the contrary (Matt. x. 23, *seq.*; John xv. 20, *seq.*); that the notion of one person's suffering being more valuable than another's is a pure figment, as also the notion that the merit of one person's suffering may be transferred to another, as, for example, from Christ to believers; that the degree of suffering does not depend on the degree of sin in individual cases—rather, it is the degree of reward that is proportioned to the degree of suffering (Matt. xx. 22; 2 Cor. iv. 17)—and yet that all suffering is the effect of sin, and the punishment of it; in particular, that the sufferings and death of Christ were the direct effect of His assuming our flesh, pervaded as it is by the principle of sin, just as our glorification is the direct effect of our receiving His Spirit, pervaded as it is by the principle of righteousness; and, finally, that the obedience unto death of Christ while on earth, as leader of salvation, and the obedience unto death of all believers, after the example of Christ, are to be attributed wholly to Divine grace, to the immediate, manifold, sublime operation of the Holy Ghost.

## CHAPTER XI.

## CHRIST AND THE BELIEVER.

WE have now reached a point from which we can almost see the close of our investigations. It has been said oftener than once that the only thing which the New Testament writers were commissioned and qualified to teach, the only subject upon which they *dogmatise* (instead of arguing), and in respect to which their opinions have any claim to be accepted as valid, is the plan or method of human salvation ; and this has now been so fully canvassed that there is scarcely any part or aspect of it that has not been before us in one connection or another. I know not that there is a single New Testament text of more than ordinary consequence which has not been somewhere quoted or referred to, and its meaning indicated more or less distinctly. Still, it should not be forgotten that well-nigh every inch of the ground over which we are travelling is battle-field, strewed with the mangled corpses of rejected interpretations, and with weapons of argument offensive and defensive ; we are, so to say, in the very heart of a territory which the enemy claims as his own, and that, too, on a double title—by right of prescription as well as by right of conquest ; to which he is therefore likely to cling with a tenacity proportioned to the length of time during which he has been in possession ; for which he will fight as for dear life, stimulated by self-interest, blinded by fanaticism, and maddened with vexation, rage, and despair. Hence the necessity of fortifying every point against his assaults. What shall be said in the present chapter will not be entirely new to the reader : nevertheless, if it serve in any degree to illustrate and confirm facts and principles which have not as yet been satisfactorily established, it will not be without its use.

At the close of the paragraph, Rom. v. 12-21, we found that the parallel between the method of ruin through Adam and the method of restoration through Christ assumed a form all but identical with that in which it appears in 1 Cor. xv. 22, 45, *seq.* Sin is conceived of as a principle, inherent in the flesh, that is, in the nature which each man derives from Adam, or brings into the world with him—a principle which reigns over the personality, and by means of the law entails upon it the penalty of death; while righteousness, in like manner, is conceived of as a principle, inherent in the spirit, that is, in the nature which each man derives from Christ, or receives in regeneration—a principle which likewise reigns over the personality, and by means of grace entails upon it the reward of life. In virtue of his natural birth, the individual is thought of as the subject of sin, and through sin of death. In virtue of his spiritual birth, the individual is thought of as the subject of righteousness, and through righteousness of life. No doubt, in Rom. v. 21 the reign of sin in death is represented as commencing only after the introduction of the law, by which sin was brought into distinct consciousness; but this difference arises out of the artificial line of argument pursued in the previous portion of the paragraph, and may for practical purposes be left out of account. The reign of sin in death is seen in the case of infants, where there is just as little consciousness of sin as there could have been in adults before the Mosaic law was given, and this proves that the simple natural view of human sinfulness and mortality, as we find it in 1 Cor. xv. 22, 45, is in every way the more accordant to fact and experience. As we said before, nature or character determines experience or destiny; the natural man is *ipso facto* the slave of sin, and through sin of death; the spiritual man is *ipso facto* the slave of righteousness, and through righteousness of life.

It was pointed out, further, in the same connection, how the two races, possessed of the two common natures—which, for convenience' sake, we shall still continue to call the Adamic and the Christian—never during the present life exist in complete separation from one another; how the members of the second race, being all originally members of the first, unite in

the totality of their persons both the common natures, and how, in consequence, they must undergo experiences proper and peculiar to both. In this it is implied that the simple parallel between Adam and Christ, with their respective descendants, runs up into a complex parallel between Christ and each believer. The simple parallel is expressed by saying, that as Adam and all in Adam die, so Christ and all in Christ shall be raised from the dead. The complex parallel is expressed by saying, that as Christ died in the flesh and was raised from the dead in the spirit, so each believer shall die in the flesh and be raised from the dead in the spirit. That is to say, the circumstances on both sides of the former parallel are combined on each side of the latter, which lies, not between those who possess Adam's nature and those who possess Christ's nature, but between Jesus Christ, who unites Adam's nature to that of Christ, and each believer, who unites Christ's nature to that of Adam.

It is this complex parallel that meets us, when, on passing from chap. v. of the Epistle to the Romans, already discussed, we enter chaps. vi., vii., upon which a few observations must now be made. We shall first of all quote the opening paragraph of chap. vi., which contains the parallel couched in several different forms of language, and accompanied with a good deal of explicative matter; and then make some attempt to disentangle the essential points, and present them in separation. As the parallel in the present case is very comprehensive, embracing on one side the entire historical experience of Christ, and, on the other, the entire historical experience of each believer, it will afford us an opportunity of surveying *the whole process of salvation* from a stand-point in some respects new, and so of assuring ourselves that we understand it thoroughly. Here, too, for the first time, we shall have no trouble from the presence of figurative language, borrowed from the Old Testament, or from attempts to accommodate the Gospel scheme of salvation to popular prejudice, by throwing it into the forms, and supporting it by the methods of the current Rabbinical exegesis. There is not a single Old Testament quotation or allusion in the whole chapter. The apostle expresses himself throughout in simple, easily intelli-



gible language, framed by himself. On this ground, I must regard the present passage as not inferior in importance to the passage last discussed, which indeed it serves to supplement and to elucidate, many points being here perfectly clear which are there very obscure.

“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. We who died [enslaved] to sin, how any more can we live [enslaved] therein? Or [to carry the argument a step farther back], are ye ignorant that all we who were baptised into Christ Jesus, were baptised into His death [as a slave to sin]? We were therefore buried with Him by means of baptism into death [as slaves to sin], in order that as Christ was raised from death [as a slave to sin] by means of the glory of the Father [=the Spirit of the Father (viii. 11, cf. ‘Spirit of glory and of God,’ 1 Pet. iv. 14)], so also we might walk in newness of life [as slaves to righteousness]. For if we have become organically united [=of one nature] with Him by the likeness of His death [in the flesh (1 Pet. iii. 18)], then also we shall be organically united [=of one nature] with Him in the likeness of His resurrection [in the spirit, (*id.*)]; knowing this, that our old man [=our flesh] was crucified with Him [in the flesh=His old man], in order that the body of sin [=the flesh] might be brought to nought, that so we might no more be enslaved to sin; for He that hath died [enslaved to sin] is justified [having been freed] from sin.

Now [to repeat what was said above, v. 5] if we died with Christ [as slaves to sin], we believe that we shall also live with Him [as slaves to righteousness]; knowing that Christ, being raised from death [as a slave to sin], dieth no more [as a slave to sin]; death no more hath mastery over Him [through sin]; for in that He died, He died [as a slave] to sin for once, but in that He liveth, He liveth [as a slave] to God [for ever]. So also ye reckon yourselves to be dead [as slaves] to sin, and living [as slaves] to God in Christ Jesus” (vv. 1-11).

One word, in passing, as to the terms in which the parallel is here expressed. It will be observed that the explicit parallel form, introduced in the first member by *as* (*ὡςπερ*), in the second by *so also* (*οὕτως καὶ*), is not so fully preserved

in the present section, as in chap. v. 12-21, and in 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22. We find it, indeed, in v. 4, at the beginning, and again in v. 11, at the close of the paragraph, showing that the idea of instituting a parallel, is still uppermost in the apostle's mind; but the necessity of arguing, instead of merely stating the parallel, has led to the frequent employment of other and less explicit forms of speech. In particular, the idea of the parallel, is mostly conveyed by means of the preposition *with* (*σὺν*). What is the precise nature of the relation which this preposition is used to describe? And how does it differ from that expressed by the preposition *in* (*ἐν*), which occurs in v. 11, and often elsewhere?

Our first thought is, that the two prepositions are used to convey exactly the same idea, and that they might be interchanged with one another. But this in itself is improbable, and, on fuller consideration, is seen to be quite erroneous. It is true that we are said to live either *with* Christ (v. 8), or *in* Christ (v. 11; 1 Cor. xv. 22); so that as regards living, either one or other of the particles may undoubtedly be used. Not so, however, as regards dying. We are never said to die *in* Christ, in the sense in which the word die is here used. Christ and we *together* (*σὺν*) die *in* Adam, in whom *all* die (1 Cor. xv. 22). And our death, which is here represented as taking place in our baptism (v. 4), is spoken of as the means of putting us *into* Christ (v. 3), not as a thing which happens to us *in* Christ. The reason, of course, is that our union to Christ by faith takes place, not in the element of flesh (the dying perishing element), but in the element of spirit (the living quickening element); we do not then assume Christ's fleshly nature, but He had before assumed ours, which is also Adam's; so that to complete our sameness of nature, or rather of natures, with Him, an assumption of the body of His humiliation on our part, is neither needful nor possible. To be in Christ implies two things, and two only. It implies being in His spirit, through possessing a spirit derived from Him, and identical in nature with His; and this again carries with it the necessity of being ultimately in His spiritual body (whatever that may mean), through possessing a body "conformed"—not to the body of His humiliation, but—"to the

body of His glory" (Phil. iii. 21). The Christ in whom the believer is said to be, is Christ the God-man, as now exalted and glorified, alike in body and spirit; and to be in Him, means to be conformed to His image, to possess His two-fold nature, in its present ultimate glorified state (Rom. viii. 29, 30). Baptism, on the other hand, which is the symbol of death with Christ, represents "the putting off of the body of the flesh" (Col. ii. 11, 12), which is not done in Christ, but in Adam with Christ, whose baptism represented exactly the same thing as ours. In short, the case stands thus: we die *in* Adam *with* Christ, meaning as Christ—the Divine-human *humiliated* Christ—died in Adam; we live *in* Christ *with* Christ, meaning as Christ—the Divine-human *glorified* Christ—lives in Himself. Still, though we cannot properly be said to die in Christ,\* we may properly enough be spoken of as *dead* in Christ, which is no doubt the meaning of v. 11, where the concluding phrase "in Christ Jesus," must apply equally to both of the previous clauses.

In discussing 1 Cor. xv. 22, we asserted that identity of nature was the only medium through which men could be said either to die in Adam or to live in Christ. Could anything more clearly confirm what was there said than the explanation which the apostle himself has here furnished? Before a man can be made alive "in Christ Jesus" (v. 11), he must have been baptised "into Christ Jesus" (v. 3), thereby becoming a *sharer of Christ Jesus' nature* (σύμψυτος, v. 5), so as in and through that *nature* (φύσις) to undergo a resurrection *identical with the resurrection that Christ underwent* (τῷ ὁμοιώματι τῆς ἀναστάσεως, v. 5). And in like manner, before a man can die with Christ in Adam, he must have become a sharer with Christ of Adam's nature, so as in and through that nature to undergo a death *like the death that Christ underwent* (τῷ ὁμοιώματι τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ), which means a death *identical with the death that Christ underwent* (εἰς τὸν θάνατον αὐτοῦ, v. 3).

If now we attempt to restore the explicit parallel form

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\* The "falling asleep in Christ" spoken of in 1 Cor. xv. 18, applies, as the context shows, to the believer's renewed nature only, and is therefore quite different from the strict dying spoken of in the passage before us.

throughout the paragraph, it will run somewhat as follows :—  
 “Therefore, as Christ Jesus was buried by means of baptism into death as a slave to sin, so also we (believers) were buried by means of baptism into death as slaves to sin ; in order that, as Christ Jesus was raised from death as a slave to sin by means of the glory of the Father, and walked in newness of life as a slave to righteousness, so also we might be raised from death as slaves to sin by means of the glory of the Father, and might walk in newness of life as slaves to righteousness.

For since, as Christ through death as a slave to sin became (head) of the one new man (Eph. ii. 15), so also we through death as slaves to sin have become (members) of the one new man ; therefore also, as Christ in life as a slave to righteousness is (head) of the one new man, so also we in life as slaves to righteousness shall be (members) of the one new man ; knowing this, that as Christ’s old man [=“his flesh” (Eph. ii. 15)] was crucified, in order that the body of sin [=“flesh of sin” (Rom. viii. 3)] might be brought to nought, that so He might no longer be enslaved to sin, but might be justified (1 Tim. iii. 16), having been freed from sin (1 Pet. iv. 1) ; so also our old man was crucified, in order that the body of sin might be brought to nought, that so we might no longer be enslaved to sin, but might be justified, having been freed from sin (Rom. vi. 18).

Now [to repeat what was said above, v. 5], since as Christ died as a slave to sin, so also we died as slaves to sin ; therefore also as Christ lives as a slave to righteousness (or God), so also we shall live as slaves to righteousness (or God) ; knowing that as Christ, in His dying, died as a slave to sin for once, so that death no more hath mastery over Him through sin (v. 23), and, therefore, He dieth no more as a slave to sin, but, being raised from death as a slave to sin, in His living He liveth as a slave to righteousness (or God) for ever (v. 23) ; so also we in our dying died as slaves to sin for once, so that death no more hath mastery over us through sin, and, therefore, we die no more as slaves to sin, but, being raised from death as slaves to sin, in our living we live as slaves to righteousness (or God) for ever.”

The above translation and paraphrase speak for themselves.



Not much, therefore, will be required to commend them to the reader's acceptance.

One very obvious but not altogether superfluous remark may be made at the outset. If the passage quoted is to be understood, it must be interpreted in the light of the connection in which it occurs, because that connection settles decisively the meaning of one or two expressions in it that might be considered of unusual or doubtful import. Nothing certainly could be more wide of the mark than the popular notion that there is a violent break in the continuity of the epistle at the end of chap. v., and that from chap. vi. onwards the apostle is dealing with a new subject—viz., sanctification as distinguished from justification, the discussion of which occupies chaps. i.-v. There is not a vestige of evidence to support such an idea. In chaps. i.-v. the apostle has been speaking of sin and righteousness, the law and grace, condemnation and justification, death and life. In chaps. vi.-viii. he is occupied with precisely the same topics. To suppose that after the fifth chapter each of these terms is used in an entirely new meaning, or even that any of them is so, is manifestly preposterous. What, for example, could be more unwarrantable than to suggest, as do the American revisers, that the word *justified* (δικαιώται), in chap. vi. 7, might by some strange possibility be taken to mean *released* (ἐλευθέρωται)? The word *release* has about as much and as little connection in meaning with the word *justify* as any other word taken at haphazard from the dictionary. And the Greek words have not one whit more connection with each other than their English equivalents. All the more objectionable does the suggestion appear when we observe that this very word *release* is used by the writer again and again in the course of this and the two chapters that follow. Surely if the apostle had meant *released* in chap. vi. 7, he would have said so, instead of saying, as he does, *justified*. The word *release* (ἐλευθερώω) is nowhere used as a synonym for the word *justify*; it is used as an antonym for the word *enslave* (δουλόω, vv. 18, 22); and to release a slave is one thing, to justify him is another. The word *release* bears the same relation to justify that the word *enslave* does to condemn; therefore to release a man is no more identical

with justifying him than to enslave a man is identical with condemning him. I have myself, indeed, supplied the phrase "having been freed" (ἐλευθερωθείς) *after* justified, some such phrase being evidently involved in the whole connection of ideas, and presupposed by the preposition *from* (ἀπὸ), which can follow justify only in a construction more or less pregnant (*cf.* Acts xiii. 39); but this is a very different thing from saying that the word *justify* (δικαίω) may be taken to mean *free* (ἐλευθερόω). Another word that might be supplied is the word *ceased*, which occurs in 1 Pet. iv. 1, under exactly similar circumstances; and the verse would then read, "He that hath died is justified (having ceased) from sin." But the word *freed*, is suggested by *enslaved* preceding, by the occurrence of the same word in vv. 18 and 22 following, and especially by the opening verses of chap. viii., where the fact of having been freed from sin, is the ground on which "there is now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus"—the ground, therefore, on which they "have been justified." It cannot be doubted, therefore, that ἐλευθερωθείς was the word nascent in the apostle's mind, suppressed in his utterance, but demanded for the full expression of his thought.

The leading terms, then, in chaps. vi.-viii. must be understood in their ordinary senses, that is, in the senses which they bear in chaps. i.-v. And if the words employed in the so-called second section of the epistle are the same as in the first, and are used in the same senses, what ground can there be for alleging that the latter section is particularly occupied with sanctification to the exclusion of justification, or that the former is particularly occupied with justification to the exclusion of sanctification? In truth, the word sanctification (in the theological sense) has no place in the doctrinal portion of the epistle at all, any more than it has in the kindred Epistle to the Galatians. The thing to which sanctification corresponds, is of course everywhere present as being an essential part of the work of salvation,—practically it covers the whole of the work of salvation; but it is never spoken of as sanctification, either in the first eight chapters of Romans, or in Galatians. Indeed, the word sanctify (ἀγιάζω), by which alone theological sanctification is expressed, occurs only a few times in the whole of

Paul's writings, and always in incidental, or, as one might say, non-doctrinal connections. We meet, it is true, in Rom. vi. 19, 22, with a word (*ἁγιασμός*) which the Revisers have thought fit to translate sanctification; but it is sufficiently plain that the word describes not a process but a state, and is used—to all appearance quite accidentally—as a synonym for the usual word righteousness (*δικαιοσύνη*). The parallelism and the sense put this beyond all reasonable doubt. The word means sanctity, or sainthood, not sanctification, and is correctly enough translated by holiness in the Authorised Version. The process described by the theological term sanctification is spoken of in the epistle as believing unto righteousness (i. 17; x. 10), attaining to righteousness by faith (ix. 30), being made righteous (v. 19); as dying to sin and rising again to righteousness (vi. 4); as putting off the old man or the flesh, and putting on the new man or the spirit (vi. 4; viii. 4); as adoption (viii. 15, 23), reconciliation (v. 11), redemption (iii. 24; viii. 23), calling (i. 7; viii. 30); but never as sanctification, if we except the incidental occurrence of the word sanctify in xv. 16. On the other hand, it is quite evident that justification on the ground of righteousness by faith pervades the whole epistle, and especially the first eight chapters. The following clear statement, bearing directly on the *ground* of justification, occurs at the opening of chap. viii.: “There is therefore now *no condemnation* [=justification] to them that are [new creatures (2 Cor. v. 17)] in Christ Jesus [having *no sin*, but having righteousness], *for the law of the spirit of life* [=the reigning principle of righteousness, and through righteousness of life] *in Christ Jesus hath freed me from the law of sin and of death* [=the reigning principle of sin, and through sin of death in Adam].” The same is likewise true of the Epistle to the Galatians, which closes with these weighty words: “Far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ through which the world hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world; *for neither is circumcision anything* [as a means of justification] *nor uncircumcision, but a new creature* [created in righteousness after God (Eph. iv. 24), and so conformed to the image of His Son (Rom. viii. 29)].” Indeed, it is hardly

too much to say, that for the Apostle Paul, justification and salvation are practically identical, just as sanctification and salvation are practically identical for the author of Hebrews, and as regeneration and salvation are practically identical for the Apostle John. Paul contemplates salvation mainly from the *judicial* standpoint, and the other elements of the process present themselves to him, and are represented by him, mainly as accessories to *justification*.

We must, therefore, dismiss all such crude and unsupported notions touching the plan of the epistle, and look at the paragraph above quoted in the light of what precedes and of what follows. The two expressions that lie at the foundation of the apostle's reasoning, and constitute the pivots on which his whole argument turns, are the expressions "die to sin" and "live to righteousness." It is the exact meaning of these expressions that we must here endeavour to settle. Now, to die *to* sin and live *to* righteousness can only mean to die *in relation to* sin and live *in relation to* righteousness, where the specific nature of the relation is open to be determined by the nature of the related terms, and this, again, by the context. And, in the present case, the context puts it beyond all doubt that the relation is constituted by a *power exercising mastery* on the one side, and a *person exercising slavery* on the other. We have just seen that in chap. v. 21 sin is conceived of as a principle inherent in the flesh, and exercising a dominating influence over the person—tending, that is, to compel obedience to itself, or (which is the same thing) disobedience to the Divine law, and through the Divine law to inflict the penalty of death; whilst righteousness, in like manner, is conceived of as a principle inherent in the spirit, and exercising an opposite dominating influence over the person—tending, that is, to compel obedience to itself, or (which is the same thing) obedience to the Divine law, and through the Divine law to confer the reward of life. In other words, the apostle's representation, implicit if not explicit, is that "the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, for these are contrary the one to the other, that ye [the persons exposed to the opposing influences of flesh and spirit] may not [by reason of the one] do the things that [by



reason of the other] ye will" (Gal. v. 17), and that "the body [= the flesh] is dead [= under the power of death] because of sin, while the spirit is life [= under the power of life] because of righteousness" (Rom. viii. 10). Still more fully and explicitly are these same ideas expressed and reiterated in the context following our passage. "Therefore, let not sin reign [= exercise mastery] in your mortal body [= your flesh], that ye should obey [= exercise slavery to] the lusts thereof; neither present your members to sin [in the capacity of your master] as instruments of unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God [in the capacity of your Master] as alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God [the Spirit of holiness]. For sin shall not exercise mastery over you, for ye are not under the law, [are not therefore being left powerless (viii. 3) in your natural state of slavery to sin], but ye are under grace, [are therefore being brought through the power of the Holy Ghost (viii. 2, 9, 11) into the renewed state of slavery to righteousness and freedom from sin].

What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not that to whom ye present yourselves as slaves for obedience, his slaves ye are whom ye obey [as slaves], whether [slaves] of sin unto death [= of sin, and through sin of death], or [slaves] of obedience unto righteousness [= of righteousness, and through righteousness of life]? But thanks be to God, that whereas ye were slaves of sin [and through sin of death], ye became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching whereunto ye were delivered, and, having been freed from sin [by the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus (viii. 2)], ye were [by the same Spirit of life in Christ Jesus] enslaved to righteousness [and through righteousness to life]" (vv. 12-18).

It is impossible for any one who is not blinded by inveterate unwillingness to see, to mistake the plain meaning of these verses. Sin and righteousness are both represented as reigning powers, the seat of the one being the body, the flesh, the natural man; that of the other, the mind (vii. 23), the spirit, the renewed man. The person to whom flesh and spirit belong is influenced, on the one hand, by sin, and, on the other, by righteousness; each of the two influences strives to produce

through the person effects corresponding to its own nature ; and in so striving, both aim at reducing the person to absolute subjection to themselves. Moreover, as both act on the person, and to opposite effects, they necessarily tend to counteract and nullify one another's influence. The reign of sin takes effect in producing obedience to the lusts of the flesh (v. 12), in using the members as instruments to accomplish its own unrighteous objects (v. 13); the reign of righteousness, on the contrary, takes effect in producing obedience to the holy desires of the spirit (vv. 16, 18), in using the members as instruments to accomplish its own righteous objects (v. 13). The presupposition is that sin and righteousness, once introduced into human nature, have each a tendency to propagate themselves, and so to extend their dominion when only partial, to maintain it when absolute. These opposing tendencies, inherent in the nature of sin and righteousness respectively, constitute them masters—by which is meant *determining influences*—within the spheres where they exist, while the persons open to their influence are slaves.

It is true that the word “slavery” appears incongruous and inappropriate in describing the believer's relation to righteousness, since it is apt to suggest the idea of shameful degradation ; and hence the apostle apologises for using it, explaining that He does so, because such a figure drawn from human relations, though not particularly apposite to the case of righteousness, is eminently apposite to the case of sin, and may by reason of the analogy be applied to the case of righteousness also. “ [In saying] slaves of sin . . . enslaved to righteousness, I speak humanly [=employ a metaphor founded on a well-known human relationship], *because of the weakness* [and consequent degradation (1 Cor. xv. 43)] *of your flesh* [*cf.* Sin shall not lord it over you, *as a master over his slave*, because ye are not under the law, *as weakened by the flesh* (v. 14 ; viii. 3)]: for [though your spirit is not weak and degraded like your flesh, still] as ye presented your members as slaves to uncleanness, and to iniquity unto iniquity, even so now ye present\* your members as slaves to righteousness,

\* The use of the imperative *present*, instead of the indicative *ye present*, required by the reasoning, is due to pregnancy or compression of the thought.

unto holiness. For when ye were slaves of sin, ye were free in regard of righteousness [having your fruit unto sin, and through sin unto death]; but now, having been freed from sin, and having become enslaved to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and [through holiness] unto eternal life; for the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God [=the wages of righteousness attained through the grace of God (2 Tim. iv. 7. 8; Phil. iii. 14)] is eternal life" (vv. 17-23). Liberty—the apostle seems to say—liberty, and not slavery, would be the more fitting term on abstract grounds to describe the relation of the renewed man to righteousness; and this term will be above all suitable, when the perfect state has been reached, and the sway of righteousness has become absolute (viii. 21). But then liberty would be wholly inappropriate to describe the relation of the unrenewed man to sin. Unlike the spirit, the flesh is actually "weak" (vi. 19; viii. 3; 1 Cor. xv. 43), "corrupt" (Rom. viii. 21; 1 Cor. xv. 42), "degraded" (v. 43), "sold [as a slave] under sin" (Rom. vii. 14), and therefore also "under the law" (vi. 14; vii. 1, *seq.*), so that it is properly spoken of as in "slavery" (viii. 21), and the possessor of it as a "slave" (vi. 17; *cf.* Heb. ii. 15). On the other hand, the case of the spirit in relation to righteousness, is strictly parallel to the case of the flesh in relation to sin, *as far as bent, inclination, or tendency towards a specific course of action is concerned*, which is the very point the apostle desires to emphasise, as affording a basis for his general argument. And, in default of any more suitable term to express that in which the two relations agree, the word slavery is applied to both, the accessory notion of degradation being left out of account.\*

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\* Many writers suppose that "the weakness of the flesh" spoken of in our text refers to the defective apprehension for things spiritual of the unrenewed mind, to which the apostle's figurative language is an accommodation. But this idea is foreign to the whole connection. For (1) the apostle contemplates his readers as no longer carnal, but spiritual (v. 17). (2) It is not evident how the use of figurative language, and particularly *such* figurative language as the apostle employs, could make that easy, which would otherwise be difficult to understand. On the apostle's own showing (viii. 21), his metaphor is properly applicable to only one side of the parallel, being in a manner the reverse of applicable to the other side: how strange, therefore, is it to suppose, that instead of explaining to his readers why and in what sense he is using an inapposite and misleading metaphor, he is tell-

I trust it may now be taken as conclusively established, that the relation expressed by the preposition "to" in the phrases "die to sin" and "live to righteousness," is that of a slave to his master, subsisting in the one case between the person and the principle of sin, inherent in unrenewed humanity; in the other case, between the person and the principle of righteousness, inherent in renewed humanity. So long and so far as the two principles of sin and righteousness exist, they exist as motive powers, prompting the person to courses of action corresponding to their own natures, and are the means of entailing consequences corresponding to their own natures, and to the actions springing therefrom.

But, further, it is clear from the language used in the paragraph we are now considering, from the context, and from numerous parallel passages, that the effect of death is to abolish the relation of slavery between the person and the principle of sin inherent in the flesh, by "bringing to nought" (*καταργεῖν*) the latter of the two related terms; and that the effect of resurrection is to constitute the relation of slavery between the person and the principle of righteousness inherent in the spirit, by "creating" (*κτίζειν*) the latter of the two related terms. The effect of Christ's death was to bring to nought His "body of sin" (vi. 6), "the body of Christ" (vii. 4), "the body of the flesh" (Col. ii. 11), the "flesh of sin" (Rom. viii. 3), &c.; and so to bring to nought the mastery of sin and death over Him (Rom. vi. 9, 10; 1 Pet. iv. 1). The

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ing them that his language has here been made particularly plain, because their apprehension is particularly dull! (3) There is no trace of special difficulty in the matter of which the apostle is treating. Literally expressed, his thesis is that "the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, for these are contrary the one to the other, that ye may not do the things that ye will." Are the relations here stated to subsist between the believer's personality and his flesh and spirit respectively made more clear or more easily intelligible, by applying to them the metaphor drawn from the relation of master and slave? (4) The argument contained in the latter half of v. 19 is left without premises, and the *for* (*γὰρ*) without a reference, on the above supposition. (5) The ordinary usage of the word "weakness," as an attribute of "flesh," and the meaning which it unquestionably bears at viii. 3, are alike opposed to the idea, that here it denotes mere intellectual deficiency. On these and other grounds, therefore, I must regard the apostle's meaning as being substantially what I have tried to explain. But the point is not one of primary importance.



effect of each believer's death "after the likeness of Christ" (Rom. vi. 5) is to bring to nought "his old man" (v. 6), his "body of sin" (*id.*), "the body of the flesh" (Col. ii. 11), his flesh of sin (Rom. vii. 18), &c.; and so to bring to nought the mastery of sin and death over him (Rom. vi. 6, 7; 1 Peter iv. 1, 2). In like manner, the effect of Christ's resurrection was to create in him a "new man" (Eph. ii. 15), "the spirit of holiness" (Rom. i. 4), "the Spirit of God, or of Christ" (viii. 9), "the Spirit" (1 Tim. iii. 16; 1 Peter iii. 18), &c.; and so to bring him into the state of slavery to God, to righteousness, and to life (Rom. vi. 10; 1 Peter iv. 2). The effect of each believer's resurrection "after the likeness of Christ" (Rom. vi. 5) is to create in him a "new man" (Eph. iv. 24), a "new spirit" (Rom. vii. 6), "Christ" (viii. 10; Gal. iv. 19), "the Spirit of God or of Christ" (Rom. viii. 11), "the Spirit" (Gal. v. 25), &c.; and so to bring him into the state of slavery to God, to righteousness, and to life (Rom. vi. 18, 22; 1 Peter iv. 2). Nothing can be plainer than that in such passages as those here adduced sin is thought of being destroyed with the destruction of the old nature humanity in which its seat is; while righteousness is thought of being created with the creation of a new Divine humanity in which its seat is. Some of the more thorough-going advocates of imputation have indeed tried to make out that by "body of sin" (Rom. vi. 6) is meant "the mass of human guilt," which the death of Christ expiated, and in that sense "brought to nought;" alleging, of course, agreeably to this, that to "die with Christ" means to *be reckoned to have died* when Christ died, or to *have the merit of Christ's death imputed* to us. There is no doubt that the exigencies of the doctrine of imputation demand that the apostle's language should be so understood; for there is not a single consideration in favour of reading that doctrine into the first five chapters of Romans, that may not be urged with equal force in favour of reading it into the following three. We cannot stop even with chapter vi., for the theory is just as urgently needed in chapter viii. 2, *seq.*, as anywhere in the epistle; and, accordingly, the writers to whom I refer, actually find imputed sin and imputed righteousness in "the law of

sin and death" and "the law of the spirit of life" of that verse, and imputed sin again, or something like it, in "flesh of sin" and "the sin in the flesh" of the verse that follows. But if we are to have imputed religion, then we must have imputed religion, and therewith be content. If to "die with Christ" be held to mean to have the merit of Christ's death imputed to us, then to be "raised from the dead" and to "walk in newness of life" with Christ must be held to mean to have the merit of Christ's resurrection and of His glorified life imputed to us. And in that case, not only the believer's sin and his righteousness, but his heaven and his hell, his life, death, and resurrection, his God and his devil, in short, the entire circle of his religion and morality, must be mere ideas, judgments, putative concepts, existing in a mind external to his own, and never entering within the horizon of his experience, so as to affect either his character or his destiny, either for good or for evil. The attempt to combine real religion with imputed religion is worse and more hopeless far than an attempt to combine iron and clay. The result is neither one thing nor another, but a muddle of sense and nonsense, intelligible ideas and arrant absurdities. What could be more extravagant or ridiculous than to allege that the expression, "body of sin" (vi. 6), means "the mass of human guilt," when it is evidently interchangeable with "old man" (*id.*), "mortal body" (v. 12), "the flesh" (vii. 5), "this body of death" (ver. 24), "flesh of sin" (viii. 3), &c. ! Do all these expressions mean "the mass of human guilt" ? The man who asserts any such thing is fit only for a lunatic asylum.

The context, we said, clearly proves that the effect of death is to abolish the person's relation to sin by abolishing the thing related, and that the effect of resurrection is to constitute the person's relation to righteousness by creating or calling into existence the thing related. The opening paragraph of chap. vii. bears directly on this very point, and teaches the substance of what we contend for in so many words. "Or [to put the same truth (*cf.* vi. 14, *seq.*) in another light] are ye ignorant that the law hath mastery over a man for so long time as he liveth ? For [to quote an illus-

trative analogy] the woman that hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband, while he liveth ; but if her husband die, she is brought to nought from the law of her husband. So then, if while her husband liveth she be joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress ; but if her husband die, she is free from the law, so that she is no adulteress though she be joined to another man. Wherefore, [in accordance with this analogy] ye also were made dead to the law through [the death of your body of sin with (vi. 6)] the body [of sin] of Christ, in order that [having been raised from the dead] ye should be joined to another, even to Him who was raised from the dead, that we might bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh [as we were before we died], the sinful passions which were through the law wrought in our members to bring forth fruit unto death ; but now we have been brought to nought from the law, having died to that wherein we were held fast, so that we exercise slavery [to righteousness] in newness of spirit [= by the help of the grace or Spirit of Christ] and not [slavery to sin] in oldness of the letter [= by the help of the law of Moses]." (vv. 1-6).

The leading points in the apostle's analogy appear to be these. The wife represents the person of the believer. The first husband represents the flesh, derived from nature, to which the believer was once enslaved, but from which he has now been set free through death, wherein the old man was brought to nought. The second husband represents the Spirit, derived from Christ, from which the believer was once free, but to which he has now been enslaved through resurrection, wherein the new man was brought into existence. So far all is clear. But some difficulty and perplexity is occasioned by what the apostle says concerning the law. The word "law" throughout the paragraph must be understood in its ordinary sense—viz., as the *Mosaic* law, which, among other things, regulates the marriage relation. Where marriage has taken place, the law is thought of as binding the contracting parties to perform the duties which they have vowed to one another. On the death of one or other of the parties, the survivor is at once released from the obligation

which the law imposed in respect of the marriage, and, to that extent, he or she is released from the law. A new marriage may accordingly be contracted, in respect of which the law will again impose the same obligation, which will be liable to be again dissolved in exactly the same way. Now since the relation of the believer, first to sin in the flesh, and then to righteousness in the Spirit, is compared to the relation of a wife to two successive husbands, we naturally expect that as in the latter case so also in the former, the law should be regarded as regulating the relation, or, more correctly, the two successive relations. In a general way this is actually done, but only in a general way, and the fact that the analogy is maintained at all, raises serious difficulties. The parallel requires that the law should be the means of keeping the believer in slavery to sin in the flesh, just as the law is the means of keeping the wife in subjection to her first husband ; and that *the same identical law*, should in like manner be the means of keeping the believer in slavery to righteousness in the spirit, just as the same identical law is the means of keeping the wife in subjection to her second husband. The parallel does *not* require that the law should be the means of bringing to nought the sin in the flesh through death, and of calling into existence the righteousness in the spirit through resurrection, any more than the law is the means of killing the wife's first husband, and of creating her second. But these conditions are not really fulfilled. So that there can be no real parallel. According to the Apostle Paul, the law is a dead letter, and as such it can neither bring the believer into the state of slavery to righteousness, nor can it keep him in that state, when he has been brought ; both these things are done by grace, which is the antithesis of the law, as this word is commonly used by Paul. That which regulates the believer's relation to righteousness in the spirit, must therefore be quite different from that which regulates his relation to sin in the flesh. In fact, the principal point which the apostle wishes to establish in the opening paragraph of chap. vii., is that the law, which (as he will have it) kept the person in slavery to sin in the flesh, must be practically defunct, now that the person has become enslaved to righteousness in the



spirit. "But now we have been brought to nought from the law, having [through the law] died [to the law (Gal. ii. 19)], wherein we were held fast, so that we serve as slaves in newness of the spirit [of grace], and not in oldness of the letter [of the law]."

But further, the law—at least the *moral* law, which the apostle has here principally in view (vv. 7-12)—has nothing whatever to do with keeping the believer enslaved to sin in the flesh, and preventing his becoming enslaved to righteousness in the spirit, though the apostle endeavours for a special purpose to prove that it has. The moral law is in every sense a help, and in no sense a hindrance, to the pursuit of righteousness. The *ceremonial* law, in so far as it tends to obliterate the moral by diverting attention from it, may have the effect of fostering and perpetuating the dominion of sin; but the moral law, in and by itself, has no such effect; certainly it was never meant by God to have such an effect; least of all, was it ever intended to be set aside *because* it had such an effect. What really stands in the way of a man's becoming enslaved to righteousness, is the "flesh" in which sin dwells, and bears sway. And it is *this* that must be brought to nought through death, in order that the believer may be joined to Him, that was raised from the dead, and may bring forth fruit unto God. Indeed, the apostle himself acknowledges as much, when he says that we are "made dead to the law, *through the body of Christ*." The presence of the flesh, with the principle of sin inseparable from it, would have kept the person in the state of slavery to sin though the law never had been given at all; neither did the introduction of the law create that state of slavery to sin, nor would the entire removal of the law dissolve it. And conversely, the believer's relation to the law is not in the least affected by his death with Christ in the flesh whereby slavery to sin is dissolved, and his resurrection with Christ in the spirit, whereby slavery to righteousness is created; that relation remains precisely as it was before; nor does it appear that the law has the smallest tendency to provoke the renewed believer to sin, as on the apostle's theory it would have; it rather serves to prevent him from sinning, and he can say, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man" (vii. 22).

The apostle, indeed, speaks of "the sinful passions *which were through the law*," as if the presence of the law, and that alone, prevented men from emancipating themselves from the flesh, and the sinful passions incident to it. But this manner of speech is due entirely to the special circumstances of his own day. The presence of the law could prevent men from emancipating themselves from the dominion of sin in the flesh only if it prevented them from receiving the Spirit by faith, and so from dying to sin, and rising again to righteousness—things which can be done only in the power of the Spirit. Now to Paul, the ceremonial law, as a thing purely physical, external, and of the present world, appeared to have been framed exclusively for man in his natural state, and to have no relation whatever to the spiritual service of God, so that the practise of it, if it were practised at all, must necessarily be a natural thing, done by a natural man, and the system could therefore have no other effect than to keep the practiser of it in his natural state. The ceremonial law was an incubus, lying upon men, and crushing them down in their natural state (Gal. iv. 3). And in the apostle's day, when the ceremonial law had practically usurped the place of the moral, the tendency to seek salvation by the mechanical observance of ceremonial ordinances, did actually prevent men from receiving the Spirit of God, by which alone the power of sin could be broken and overcome. Thus, at the time when the apostle wrote, the law might truly be said to foster and perpetuate the dominion of sin, and a man's separation from the law, might be the leading step in the process of his deliverance from sin and enslavement to righteousness. But in our day, when the moral law occupies its true place, the ceremonial having been set aside as a matter of human invention, or for some other reason, the same can hardly be maintained.

No doubt the apostle does seem to maintain something more than the negative position that the letter of the law can afford men no real assistance in overcoming sin and attaining to righteousness—that it rather exists as a stumbling-block, blinding their minds, and hindering them from accepting the promise of the Spirit contained in the Gospel: he seems to attribute to it a positive efficiency in the way of producing

sin, and that not merely by bringing it into distinct consciousness, and so conferring upon it the power to inflict death, but also by provoking the principle of sin, which otherwise would have lain dormant, to exercise and develop itself, to work in the sinner all manner of lusting (v. 8), and so to bring forth fruit unto death (v. 5); and this is a function which appears to be attributed especially to the *moral* law (v. 14). The apostle's words are: "What shall we say then? Is the law sin [a natural enough question when he had just represented 'the passions of sins' as being '*through the law*']? God forbid. Rather I had not known sin except through the law; for I had not known lust except the law had said, Thou shalt not lust; but *sin finding occasion wrought in me through the commandment all manner of lust*; for apart from the law sin is dead. And I was alive apart from the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died; and the commandment, which was [professedly] unto life, this I found to be [really] unto death; for *sin finding occasion through the commandment beguiled me*, and through it slew me" (vv. 7-11). The idea present in these verses, and particularly in the words emphasised, is generally held to be that expressed in the line of Ovid, *Nitimur in vetitum semper cupimusque negata*: "We strive after what is forbidden always, and desire things denied us." Some commentators, it is true, dispute this, holding that the apostle regards the law as the means of awakening the *knowledge* of sin and nothing more; an opinion which they are probably led to entertain all the more readily, because the idea of sin being actively promoted and produced by the law is both startling in itself, and is not adequately, or not at all, borne out by experience. For my own part, I greatly doubt whether such an idea has any real foundation in fact. And yet I cannot deny that it is here taught by the apostle. To be plain, I can hardly help thinking that the apostle has misunderstood and misinterpreted his own experience, and that he attributes effects to the letter of the law which were really produced by other means. When he says, "I was alive apart from the law once, but when the commandment came," &c., the period to which he refers as

that at which the commandment came is the time of his conversion, and what the apostle then received was not the letter of the law but the Spirit of the Gospel, which "came" and began to operate in his soul. The letter of the law had been familiar to Paul from his youth up, so that he could say, "As touching the righteousness which is in the law I was found blameless" (Phil. iii. 6); but the knowledge of the letter of the law produced none of the effects which he here ascribes to it. What really came to the apostle at his conversion, and what really produced the effects which are here so vividly set forth was not the commandment, with which he had all along been perfectly well acquainted, but the Spirit of Christ, of which he had up till then been utterly ignorant. It was the advent of the Spirit, not the advent of the letter of the law, that, as an opposing hostile power, stirred into lively exercise the dormant power of the sin existing in the flesh. It was the presence of the Spirit, not the presence of the letter of the law, that brought into existence that state of inner conflict of which the apostle was ever afterwards conscious more or less, and which constrained him at times to cry out, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (vii. 24)—and to say, "I buffet my body and bring it into bondage, lest by any means after that I have preached to others I myself should be rejected" (1 Cor. ix. 27). That vivid consciousness of the power and working of sin within him, which the apostle experienced, and which others like him have experienced, was not due to the mere knowledge of the letter of the law, for that knowledge was possessed by him before there was any experience of it; but rather to the antagonistic power and working of the Spirit of God. Even the bare knowledge of sin as sin, which is here and elsewhere attributed wholly to the knowledge of the letter of the law, must be largely ascribed to other causes. We had occasion to point out in an earlier chapter that the apostle, when he wishes to make a special point, greatly under-estimates the knowledge of sin possessed by men who do not possess the Mosaic law, and we can easily see from the present passage, where he has also a special point to make, that he greatly over-estimates the knowledge of sin possessed by men who do



possess the Mosaic law *and nothing more*. He acknowledges, with reference to his own experience before conversion, that he was alive once, and that sin in him was dead; meaning by this (1) that he had no distinct *knowledge* of sin actually committed by him—he was “found blameless” (Phil. iii. 6); and (2) that the principle of sin inherent in his flesh did not *work in him all manner of lust*—it was comparatively inactive—at least so he felt it to be. Now the apostle asserts that these two results were due to the fact that he was “apart from the law.” But was he really apart from the law? No such thing. How could he have been found blameless as touching the righteousness which is in the law (Phil. iii. 6)—how could he have been in the same frame of mind as was the young man with great possessions (Mark x. 20)—if he had been apart from the law in the sense that he did not know what it said (v. 7)? In fact, we are aware from other sources that he was thoroughly well versed, at the time of which he speaks, in every precept which the law contained. Yet the law did not awaken in him a distinct knowledge of his own sinfulness, any more than it did in the young ruler, any more than it did in the mass of his Jewish contemporaries, whom he says elsewhere it was intended to shut up under sin (Gal. iii. 23). Nor, again, had the law any effect in the way of causing the principle of sin to exercise and develop itself in him. That the apostle lusted in his unconverted state is very likely, nay is quite certain; but that his doing so was in no respect occasioned by the law is equally certain. He was conscious of no inner conflict, no struggling against the uprisings of sin in his heart; he lusted simply as a matter of course, and his doing so was not felt to be sin at all, nor resisted as such; and this for no other reason than *because the law had failed to awaken in him a deep or adequate consciousness of sin*. Instead of saying “Apart from the law sin is dead; and I was alive apart from the law once, but when the commandment came sin revived, and I died,” the apostle ought really to have said, “Apart from the Spirit sin is dead [in the flesh]; and I was alive [in the flesh] once, but when the Spirit came sin [in the flesh] revived, and I died [in the flesh].” It was the *relativity*

created by the presence of righteousness in the spirit that brought sin into distinct consciousness, and it was the *resistance* offered by righteousness to sin that made the latter to appear (if not actually to be) quickened, stimulated, and increased. As the man who has never been conscious of cold can have no adequate consciousness of heat, so the man who has never been conscious of righteousness can have no adequate consciousness of sin. Not till the apostle's conversion did he attain to an adequate knowledge of sin, and not till then did the inward conflict with sin commence; but then it was not the letter of the law but the Spirit of the Gospel that constituted the new factor in the apostle's experience; and, therefore, it is to this factor, and not to the other, that we must attribute whatever changes took place. It is the presence of the Spirit that really brings sin into consciousness, as well as provokes it to exercise its power; and the apostle's anxiety to find a reason for setting aside the letter of the law has led him to attribute functions to it which are really discharged not by it but by something else.

It may be said, indeed, that the apostle's knowledge of sin really came through the law, only it came through the law, *as adequately understood by the Spirit*. But to say that the knowledge of sin came through the Spirit, and to say that it came through the law as adequately understood by the Spirit, is merely to express the same thing in two different ways. The idea so expressed is no doubt true enough, and it is that to which the apostle refers when he speaks of the law as spiritual, while he is carnal, sold under sin (v. 14). Ordinarily the law is regarded by the apostle as a dead letter, in contrast to the living Spirit of the Gospel (2 Cor. iii. 3, 6), and then it is spoken of not as spiritual but as carnal, and is practically identified with the *ceremonial* law (Gal. iv. 3; Eph. ii. 15; Heb. vii. 16; ix. 10). Here, where the law is practically identified with the *moral* law, and is thought of as combined with the Spirit, it is spoken of as spiritual, and, of course, it can no longer be spoken of as either a dead letter or as carnal. In fact, the law, *as adequately understood by the Spirit*, is absolutely identical with the Gospel itself; for the same spiritual insight that perceives the deeper meaning of the

moral law, perceives also the utter meaninglessness of the ceremonial, and therefore leaves it out of account. This identity of the law, considered as spiritual, holy, righteous, and good, with the Gospel comes out plainly on comparing the closing verses of chap. vii. with the opening verses of chap. viii. The antithesis between "the law of the spirit of life" and "the law of sin and death," which appears in viii. 2, is regarded, not without reason, as corresponding in substance to the apostle's favourite antithesis between the Gospel as the spirit that giveth life and the law (with which is inseparably associated the flesh) as the letter that killeth. Now the antithesis of viii. 2 evidently corresponds exactly to the antithesis of vii. 25 between "the law of God," to which the mind (or spirit) of the believer is enslaved, and "the law of sin," to which his flesh is enslaved. It follows that "the law of God" must be identical with "the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus," that is, with the Gospel. And this proves how completely justified we were in the line of argument pursued in last paragraph. The commandment, which came to the apostle at his conversion, was nothing else than the Gospel. Whatever deeper knowledge of sin was then attained, it was the Gospel that gave birth to it. Whatever inner conflict, and whatever increase of sin was then created, it was the Gospel that brought it about. But the result just indicated proves more : it proves how completely the apostle has circumvented himself. He began with the position that the believer must by every means be brought to nought from the law, in order to be joined to Christ, to the spirit of life, to the Gospel, that so he might bring forth fruit unto God (vv. 4-6). He ends with the position that the believer is permanently joined to the law as a slave to his master, and that, in being so joined, he brings forth fruit unto God (v. 25). He began by regarding the law as a dead letter, calculated only to foster and produce sin, and requiring to be set aside, if righteousness and life were to be attained by the believer (vv. 4-6). He ends by regarding the law as instinct with a living spirit, to which the believer is enslaved, and by which he attains to righteousness and life (v. 25). And, of course, when the law is regarded as the means of salvation, the idea of setting it aside, or of the

believer dying to it, is out of the question.\* The thing to which the believer must die, and from which he must be brought to nought, is not the law of God, but the flesh, with the principle of sin inherent therein, which is constantly warring against him, and bringing him into captivity to itself, and to death as its wages or consequence (v. 25). And this is exactly what we asserted. There is no such thing as a setting aside of the *whole law*, though the apostle endeavours to prove that this must be done, because he has no other means of proving that the *ceremonial part* must be set aside. What required to be done, in the case of the moral part of the law, was not to set it aside like the ceremonial part, but to combine with it the spirit of the Gospel, so that it should no longer be a dead letter but living and operative as a means of salvation. It was the ceremonial law and that alone that required to be set aside, inasmuch as it tended to obscure the import of the moral, and, by leading men to rely on their own natural efforts, to prevent them from asking or accepting the promised aid of the Spirit of God, by which the latter was always intended to be accompanied and obeyed. To represent the

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\* The edge of the present argument cannot be turned by falling back on the Protestant scholastic distinction between "the law as a covenant of works" and "the law as a rule of life," and alleging that the law is abrogated in the former of these characters, but re-enacted, or rather not abrogated, in the latter. For (1) the antithesis between "the law as a covenant of works," and "the law as a rule of life," has no existence for the Apostle Paul, who distinguishes merely between "the law as a dead letter" and "the law as a living spirit," which is another antithesis altogether. (2) The antithesis between "the law as a covenant of works," and "the law as a rule of life," is not only unscriptural but anti-scriptural. For "the law as a covenant of works," if it mean anything, must mean "the law supported by penal sanctions," with which every transgressor is visited; and "the law as a rule of life," if it is to have any meaning distinct from this, must mean "the law unsupported by penal sanctions," from which every transgressor escapes. But the law is never unsupported by penal sanctions. It enters into the very notion and essence of law, considered simply as such, that it is supported by penal sanctions. A law unsupported by penal sanctions would not be a law at all, but merely a guide-book. And it is certain that the law under which the believer lives, and to which he is subject, is not "the law unsupported by penal sanctions," but just the same identical law under which the unbeliever lives, and under which, if he repent not, he will suffer and die eternally. The believer incurs the penalty of the law every time he transgresses it, otherwise he could not require forgiveness; his relation to the law is therefore absolutely identical with that of the unbeliever, who is said to be under it "as a covenant of works."



moral law as designed to do nothing more than convey the knowledge of sin, and further its development in human nature is thus manifestly a mere artifice, which the apostle's own argument, ere the chapter is concluded, affords materials for confuting.

Indeed, I suspect the reader will now more than ever be disposed to doubt whether the law in any form—either as dead letter, or as living spirit—is a means of increasing or developing sin in human nature. The idea that apart from the law sin is dead, must strike one as a little strange, when viewed in the light of what the apostle himself says in chap. i. respecting the sins of the heathen. That chapter may be taken as proof that sin in the natural man, even in the heathen natural man, is dead only in a very qualified sense, viz., in the sense that the higher forms of sin, which the apostle speaks of as lust, are committed habitually without being felt to be sin, and consequently without causing any mental struggle. The truth appears to be that the apostle in saying that “apart from the law, sin is dead,” is simply elevating his own special experience before conversion into a universal principle. The apostle could look back (as others like him can do), on a time when his inner life was comparatively unruffled, and when the peculiar form of sin which he calls lust, though it might be habitually indulged without restraint, mingled with his other feelings, and was not felt to have any specific existence. This state of things continued till the commandment came, and the Spirit of God entered his soul. Then the lusts of the flesh had to do battle for existence against the new desires of the Spirit, which were at once felt to be contrary to them. Then the apostle became vividly conscious of the existence of lust as a specific form of feeling, of its antagonism to the Spirit, of its character as sin, of the need of repressing it, and of its power and energy to resist repression. Then he could feel, as with a stethoscope, both its uprising and its subsidence, and the effect which each had on the presence and working of the opposing power. And this vivid consciousness of the presence of lust and its working, and of the inward struggle arising through conflict with the Spirit and his working, made it appear as if sin were now

greatly increased, and as if the law—more properly the Gospel—were the cause of its increase. But was it really increased? or was it only brought into distinct consciousness? Can we maintain so much as the apostle does, even when guarding himself against misconstruction to the very uttermost? “So that the law is holy, and the commandment holy and righteous and good. Did then that which is good become death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might be shown to be sin, by working death to me *through that which is good*;—*that through the commandment sin might become exceeding sinful*” (vv. 12, 13). In estimating the force of the apostle’s language in this and similar passages, it is by no means out of place to remember that he was a bachelor, besides being, like Augustine, a man of strong feeling and warm imagination. Human nature now, as always, is very delicately balanced; in its finer specimens, particularly so. Most of us, who are similarly circumstanced with the apostle, are, I daresay, familiar enough with the kind of inward struggle between good and evil desire, which he has here in view. In deciding, therefore, whether the manifestations of evil desire are actually enhanced by the presence of religious life, in the strict sense, let every reader who can appeal to his own experience. Those whose strictly religious experience dates from a period somewhat later in life than my own will be better qualified to give an opinion on the subject than I can profess to be.

To return. In spite of its inexactness, the essential point of the apostle’s analogy is obvious enough. The believer is related to his sinful flesh very much as a wife is related to her first husband; and as the wife is released from the obligation or duty to obey her husband by his death and consequent destruction, so the believer is released from the obligation or tendency to obey his sinful flesh by its death and consequent destruction. Again, the believer is related to the Spirit of Christ very much as a wife is related to her second husband; and as the wife comes under the obligation or duty to obey her husband by the act of her union to him, so the believer comes under the obligation or tendency to obey the Spirit of God by the act of his union to it. In

other words, the effect of the believer's death with Christ in the flesh is to place him out of relation to sin as a ruling power; the effect of the believer's resurrection with Christ in the spirit is to place him in relation to righteousness as a ruling power.

So much having been said by way of explanation, the reasoning of the paragraph with which we started (vi. 1-11) will now, I trust, be found sufficiently clear and intelligible. The one point, which it is the aim of the whole section to establish, and upon which every part of it directly bears is—negatively viewed, the impossibility of the believer's continuing in sin—positively viewed, the necessity of the believer's continuing in righteousness; and the steps by which this conclusion is reached, will be distinctly seen, if we throw the argument into the syllogistic form, thus:—

## I.

(1.) Baptism into Christ represents death with Christ (in the flesh) into organic union with Christ (in the Spirit).

(2.) The believer has undergone baptism into Christ.

(3.) Therefore the believer must have undergone death with Christ (in the flesh) into organic union with Christ (in the Spirit).

## II.

(1.) Organic union or identity of nature involves identity of experience.

(2.) The believer possesses organic union with Christ (in the Spirit).

(3.) Therefore the believer must undergo a like experience with Christ (in the Spirit).

## III.

(1.) The believer must undergo a like experience with Christ (in the Spirit).

(2.) Christ (in the Spirit) experienced resurrection and life to righteousness.

(3.) Therefore the believer (in the Spirit) must experience resurrection and life to righteousness.

From these syllogisms we gather that resurrection with Christ to righteousness is the necessary outcome of death with Christ to sin, being represented, from the standpoint of the Divine purpose (*ἴνα*, v. 4), as the end for which death to sin took place. And the mediating link between the past certainty (vv. 2, 3) of death with Christ to sin, and the future certainty (vv. 5, 8) of resurrection and life with Christ to righteousness, is the experimental fact of identity of nature as between the believer and Christ, combined with the historical fact of Christ's resurrection and glorification. It is held to be self-evident that if Christ were raised (v. 9), then all in Christ must in like manner be raised (v. 11; cf. 1 Cor. xv. 12, 13). The statements of v. 5 and v. 8 correspond to each other, and might be combined into one in the following way: "If we died with Christ (at baptism), and so have become of one nature with Christ, then also we shall be of one nature with Christ (at resurrection), and so shall be raised to life with Christ." That is to say, death with Christ in the flesh is represented as the *cause* of union to Christ; resurrection with Christ in the Spirit is represented as the *effect* of union to Christ. And hence, while death is ascribed to the agency of baptism (v. 4), and the power of sin (viii. 10), resurrection is ascribed to the agency of the Spirit (viii. 11), and the power of God (*id.*; vi. 4), or of righteousness (viii. 11). The rendering of the Revisers would lead us to understand that death and resurrection are alike the means of union to Christ, and that because death with Christ in the flesh effected our union to Christ, therefore also resurrection with Christ in the Spirit will effect our union to Christ. In other words, according to them the argument is:—

(1.) Whatever death with Christ (in the flesh) causes resurrection with Christ (in the Spirit) causes.

(2.) Death with Christ (in the flesh) caused our union with Christ (in the Spirit).

(3.) Therefore resurrection with Christ (in the Spirit) will cause our union with Christ (in the Spirit).

But this reasoning, so far from being self-evident, is not even intelligible, unless we understand by the first *σύνφυτος* partial union, and by the second complete union, which we



have no warrant for doing. Besides, such a conclusion is quite apart from the apostle's purpose. What his argument (v. 4) requires is that resurrection and life with Christ should necessarily follow death with Christ: what is proved by the above syllogism is that resurrection with Christ, when it takes place, will necessarily cause union to Christ. This would lend support to the apostle's position only if our union to Christ were a self-evident future necessity, and if resurrection with Christ were the only means by which it could be effected. But it is plain that neither of these two things is the fact. The believer's union to Christ is not a future necessity, but a past contingency, as appears from the opening clause of the verse; and vv. 8, 11, as well as chap. viii. 9-11, prove beyond all doubt that the believer's resurrection and life with Christ is not the means, but the consequence, of his union to Christ in the Spirit. Resurrection and life *with* Christ has no other meaning than resurrection and life *in organic union with* Christ. Finally, the Revisers' rendering is opposed to the language used, since it takes no proper account of the change of verb in the two members of the verse (*γεγόναμεν—ἐσόμεθα*). To translate the latter verb *shall be*, while retaining the preposition *by* along with it, is simply to use language fitted to mislead the reader; for the notion of *becoming* is pre-supposed in the preposition *by*, and, though not expressed, must be supplied in thought after the substantive verb, along with the other words which the Revisers have put in italics; so that "shall be" (*ἐσόμεθα*) when accompanied with "*by* the likeness of His resurrection," means nothing less or more than "shall become" (*γενησόμεθα*). If we are to insist on the same preposition in both clauses, where the Greek has no preposition in either clause, then we must use not *by* (which is too specific), but *in* (which, like the Greek dative, is sufficiently indefinite to allow the sense of the different verbs to express itself). Thus: "If we have *become* organically united with Him in the likeness of His death, then also we shall *be* organically united with Him in the likeness of His resurrection"—where the force of the latter verb, and the change of relation which it implies, are felt distinctly and at once. It is indeed evident that the apostle's language here, as often else-

where, does not express his thought with perfect precision. We should expect, "If we have become of one nature with Him by undergoing a like death, therefore also, as being of one nature with Him, we shall undergo a like resurrection. There was a certain conflict between the requirements of sense, which dictated the verbs *γεγόναμεν* and *ἐσόμεθα*, and the requirements of symmetry, which determined the general form of the sentence, and the result has been a compromise, in which neither sense nor symmetry is perfectly preserved. To render, therefore, as the Revisers do, is to purchase seeming literality at the expense of obscuring the sense, and throwing the reader off the track.

It thus appears that the apostle's object, which is to establish the impossibility of the believer's continuing in sin, and the necessity of his continuing in righteousness, is accomplished by proving that the experience of each believer must be parallel to that of Christ. If it be certain that Christ, after He rose from the dead, possessed the *non posse peccare*, then it is also certain that each believer must possess the *non posse peccare*. This, in a single sentence, is the sum of the whole paragraph.

But the point of view in some verses of the paragraph is evidently a little peculiar. The apostle represents the believer's death to sin and his resurrection to righteousness as things already completed, implying that the believer's earthly experience must be parallel to Christ's heavenly experience, and that continuance in sin must be just as impossible, and continuance in righteousness just as necessary, to the believer *during his present life* as they are to Christ, now that He is exalted at God's right hand. Such a mode of representation is not, it is true, entirely peculiar to the passage before us, for not Paul merely, but all the New Testament writers are fond of contemplating the believer in his ideal state, and of identifying him with the renewed or Christ-like element within him. However, there is a special reason why that should be done here. The apostle's point of view is largely determined by the symbolism of baptism, which enters as an important factor into the proof of his position. The baptism of his readers was already a thing of the past. Baptism represents death

to sin, the putting off of the old man—the body of the flesh (Col. ii. 11, 12)—with which is inseparably connected resurrection to righteousness, the putting on of the new man—the Spirit of Christ (*id.*). The demergergence into the water symbolises burial (v. 4). The emergence from the water symbolises resurrection, of which the necessary outcome is walking in newness of life (*id.*). Not that the water of baptism is to be regarded as the symbolic agent in resurrection as well as in death. Death is “by means of baptism,” but resurrection is “by means of the glory of the Father,” by the ineffable “working” (ἐνέργεια) of the Father through the Spirit (i. 4; viii. 11; Eph. i. 19). Regeneration, renewal, or sanctification is by water *and by the Spirit* (John iii. 5; Tit. iii. 5; Eph. v. 26). The two are contradistinguished here as always, and the latter alone is an efficient and proper agent. For while the communication of new life is directly and efficiently the work of the Holy Spirit, the putting off of the body of sin is only symbolically the work of baptism; efficiently it may be regarded as the work of that “cross” of trials and sufferings which every Christian has to bear; just as the baptism of Jesus symbolically represented (Col. ii. 11, 12), while His cross really effected (v. 14; Eph. ii. 16), the putting off of the body of His flesh, the wrestling-ground of the powers of evil (Col. ii. 15; Eph. vi. 12). But it is not clear that anything beyond the creation of the new man by the power of the Holy Ghost is needed to effect the putting off of the old, which is merely the negative side of the same process, and this may account for the fact that only the symbolical instrument is usually mentioned in connection with it. The notion that baptism is the instrument of regeneration *ex opere operato* is a little beside the mark, seeing that baptism does not even represent what is confessedly the essential part of regeneration—viz., repentance or renewal—what the apostle speaks of as resurrection. Baptism is no more the efficient cause of regeneration than the baptism of Jesus was the efficient cause of His miraculous conception, of His bodily resurrection, and of every step in His spiritual development between these two. The baptism of Jesus effected, not the communication of the Holy Spirit,—though that was done in a special manner *after*

baptism,—but, if anything, His crucifixion and death, which no one will attribute to it in any other than a symbolical sense. The believer's baptism, in like manner, symbolises a process that begins with the first moment of faith and is completed with the death of the body, and this negative process is correlative to, and contemporaneous with, a positive process that likewise begins with the first moment of faith and is completed with the resurrection of the body. In the passage before us the one process is spoken of as death, the other as resurrection; the one is attributed to the agency of baptism, the other to the agency of the Holy Ghost. I have said they are contemporaneous; for the same act of faith that secures each successive step in the one, secures at the same time a corresponding step in the other; it were bootless, therefore, to inquire which is first or which is second in the order either of time or logic.

Now, since baptism represents the entire process of death to sin, and since the exigencies of the apostle's argument lead him to identify the sign and the thing signified, it is quite natural that he should speak of the latter equally with the former as being a thing already completed and past. That this was merely an assumed point of view, a mode of contemplating and representing known and acknowledged facts, was self-evident, and did not require to be specially stated. Accordingly, it is taken for granted that the reader will understand, when the apostle recurs in the sequel to the matter-of-fact point of view, and speaks of the "mortal body" as still in existence, and of its lusts as still claiming to reign (v. 12).

The truth is, that it lies on the very face of the passage under consideration, it is involved in the whole texture of the reasoning, and besides it is rendered perfectly self-evident by the historical and experimental facts themselves, that the present earthly experience of the believer is parallel, not to the present heavenly experience of Christ (though the apostle seems at times to imply this), but to the past earthly experience of Christ; or, to be more exact, the earthly experience of Christ is the *ideal* which believers on earth are exhorted to imitate and reproduce. That Christ had a body of sin as well as a spirit of righteousness while on earth, that He was related



to both precisely as each believer is, the only difference being that He obeyed the injunction, "Let not sin reign in your mortal body," with a constancy to which no other believer has been able to attain; that His earthly life, like the earthly life of all His followers, was occupied in dying to sin and rising again to righteousness, is taught either expressly or by implication in every verse of the paragraph after the subject has been introduced (v. 3), and is so manifestly the fundamental pre-supposition that lies at the basis of the author's reasoning—the keystone of His argumentative arch, if one may so say—that, if we suppose it removed, the whole fabric will collapse and "tumble all together" in utter chaos and unintelligibility. I defy any man to give a consistent and intelligible account, either of the apostle's language, or of his reasoning, on any other supposition than that Christ had an earthly experience parallel in every respect to the earthly experience of each believer, just as he has a heavenly experience parallel in every respect to what shall be the heavenly experience of each believer. And, not to speak of the results already obtained, both in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and in connection with iii. 24-26 above, the same truth is taught with equal, if not with greater clearness in two other well-known passages of the present epistle, which have not yet received so much attention as they deserve. Let us turn for a moment and look at these.

The first is contained in the writer's prologue, of which it forms the most important part. "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called so as to be an apostle, separated unto the Gospel of God, which He promised afore through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning His son, who was born of the seed of David [in weakness], as regards [His] flesh [of sin], who was determined to be the Son of God in power, as regards [His] Spirit of holiness, by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we received grace and apostleship for [=to produce (xv. 18)] obedience [=righteousness (vi. 16)] of faith among all the Gentiles" (vv. 1-5). The parallelism in v. 4, with which we are specially concerned, might be rendered more exact thus:—"Who was determined to be the Son of man in weakness, as regards His flesh of sin, by death, who

was determined to be the Son of God in power, as regards His spirit of holiness, by resurrection." Very noteworthy it is, that Paul begins the greatest of his epistles, in which "his Gospel," as he elsewhere calls it, is most fully propounded, by declaring explicitly that his vocation and separation as an apostle was *unto the Gospel of God*, which means *unto the plan of human salvation*; showing that we were perfectly justified in asserting that the only subject on which he was qualified to teach authoritatively, was the method of human salvation. But, indeed, the same idea runs through all his epistles, notably, for example, through that to Galatians, where he insists not merely with earnestness, but with passion, that the Gospel he preached was revealed to him direct by God, and was not dependent on any secondary evidence whatever. Does he ever assert as much, or anything like as much, regarding matters not directly connected with the plan of salvation? Never. It was the Gospel alone with respect to which the apostles possessed profounder knowledge than their contemporaries, though we may readily admit that they themselves, like religious men generally in whom the critical spirit has not been developed, were imperfectly conscious of the limits within which their higher knowledge was confined. Now the rudiments of the Gospel, as the apostles taught it, are already presented in the two relative clauses of the verse that forms our present text. In the one clause we have on the part of the Leader of Salvation and head of redeemed humanity, incarnation, weakness, sin, suffering, death—humiliation and its consequences; in the other clause, spiritualisation, power, holiness, resurrection, life—exaltation and its consequences; and the result of both combined, is the ability to discharge his function as "Jesus Christ, our Lord"—to bestow the grace of His Holy Spirit on all who believe on Him, so that they, after His example, may attain to righteousness and life on passing through suffering and death (v. 5).

That we are fully warranted in supplying "in weakness" as the counterpart to "in power" is shown by, among other passages, the following from 2 Corinthians: "He was crucified *through weakness* (ἐξ ἀσθενείας), but liveth *through the power of God* (ἐκ δυνάμεως θεοῦ), for we also are weak with Him, but

shall live with Him by the power of God" (xiii. 4)—weakness being the note of flesh and the cause of death, power the note of spirit and the cause of resurrection, alike in the case of Christ and in that of each believer. Again, that death is the necessary outcome of incarnation, as resurrection is the necessary outcome of spiritualisation, is manifestly pre-supposed in the second of the two clauses itself, for without death there could have been no resurrection; and the same is plainly taught in numberless other texts, of which these three may be quoted as specimens:—"As in Adam [or David] all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive" (1 Cor. xv. 22), taken along with "He was put to death through the flesh, but made alive through the Spirit" (1 Pet. iii. 18), and with "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness" (Rom. viii. 10).

Further, it is easy to justify the insertion of the words "of sin" after flesh, so as to correspond with "of holiness" after Spirit. For the presence of sin is implied in the meaning of the word flesh, just as the presence of holiness, even if left unexpressed, would have been implied in the meaning of the word Spirit. Throughout the New Testament flesh, when contrasted with Spirit of holiness, invariably means "flesh of sin," just as Spirit, when contrasted with flesh of sin, invariably means "Spirit of holiness." The presence of sin in the flesh is likewise implied in the fact of Christ's death, just as the presence of holiness in the Spirit is implied in the fact of His resurrection-life, as appears very clearly from the text last quoted, "If Christ be in you [=if ye be what Christ was], the body is dead *because of sin*, but the Spirit is life *because of righteousness*." Moreover, the presence of sin is clearly implied when it is said that the flesh of Christ was born of the sinful seed of David, in contrast to His Spirit, which was born of the Holy God. For these words have no meaning, unless they mean that the flesh of Christ was identical in nature with the flesh of the seed of David, from whom He received it, in like manner as His Spirit was identical in nature with the Spirit of God, from whom He received it. And that the flesh of David's seed was "flesh of sin" is as certain as it is that the Spirit of God is a Spirit of holiness.

It is even impossible to understand why an antithesis should be drawn between the man-derived flesh and the God-derived Spirit of Christ at all,—precisely such an antithesis as is constantly drawn between the man-derived flesh of sin and the God-derived Spirit of holiness of each believer,—and then, in particular, why the latter should be spoken of as characterised by holiness, and the former not, if the former equally with the latter were characterised by holiness, and not by sin, as it elsewhere always is. Flesh of holiness! Does not the very expression sound like a contradiction? How entirely unapostolic it is! Nor, again, can we escape the plain meaning of the passage by alleging that the flesh of Christ was identical with that of Adam *before he fell*, for the apostle does not say that the flesh of Christ was derived from Adam at all, much less that it was derived from Adam *before he fell*. He simply affirms that Christ was born of David's seed, which is equivalent to affirming that He was "born of woman," and therefore "born under [the curse of] the law [on account of sin], that He might redeem them which were [born of woman and therefore born] under [the curse of] the law [on account of sin]" (Gal. iv. 4, 5). To be born of woman means nothing less or more than to receive woman's nature in the way that every child of woman receives it. The expression does not point to the mere act of parturition, nor yet to the mere process of gestation, but to "becoming" such as took place when "God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul" (Gen. ii. 7). And in this sense the "becoming" of Christ's flesh was *from* the seed of David" (ἐκ σπέρματος Δαβὶδ), or "*from* woman" (ἐκ γυναικός), just as really as the becoming of His Spirit was "*from* God" (ἐκ θεοῦ). What Dr. Owen says about the work of the Holy Spirit in forming the natural body of Christ has no other foundation than the blundering LXX. translation of Ps. xl. 6, as quoted in Heb. x. 5. If the body of Christ had been formed, as Dr. Owen alleges, by the immediate operation of the Holy Ghost, it would not have been a natural body at all, but a spiritual body; it would not have been from the seed of David or from woman at all, but from God, just as really as His Spirit was, seeing that "all the [new] things are *of* God" (ἐκ



θεοῦ, 2 Cor. v. 18); it would not have been a "body of humiliation," but a "body of glory," and, being so, it would not have required to be transformed by the operation of the same Holy Ghost from the state of humiliation into the state of glory, as every other body which is from the seed of David and from woman requires to be (Phil. iii. 21); it would have been from the first moment of the incarnation in the state of redemption, and therefore could not have been under the law as the body of every believer is under the law, and requiring to be redeemed as the body of every believer requires to be redeemed (Gal. iv. 5; Rom. viii. 23). Possibly it may be thought strange and inexplicable that the flesh of Christ should have been from woman in the same sense that the flesh of every one else is from woman, while His Spirit was from God in another sense than that in which the spirit of every believer is from God; but people who are not prepared to accept what is strange and inexplicable in connection with this subject had better give up the miraculous conception entirely, and hold that Christ was an ordinary man begotten in the ordinary way, instead of wasting their energy in futile attempts to pervert the plain meaning of Scripture, and foist their own rationalistic fancies on the New Testament writers.

Once more, independent of all other considerations, such a text as the following proves decisively that the flesh of Christ was characterised by sin, and that, unless it had been so, He could have done nothing towards redeeming us from sin. "Him who had not known sin He made to become sin on our behalf [in David], in order that we [who had not known righteousness] might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. v. 21). The parallelism might be still further adjusted thus:—"He who had not known sin became sin of man in David, in order that we who had not known righteousness might become righteousness of God in Him." Who can fail to recognise here the very same thought which we find in Gal. iv. 4, 5: "When the fulness of the time came, God [= 'He'] sent forth [= 'made'] His Son [= 'Him who had not known sin,' *scil.* before the fulness of time], become of a woman, become under the law [= 'become sin of man in David'], to redeem them that were under the law [= 'on our behalf who

had not known righteousness'], in order that we might receive the adoption of sons [= 'in order that we might become the righteousness of God in Him']?" It is quite evident that the time when God made Christ to become sin coincides with the time when God sent forth His Son become of a woman, that is, with the time when Christ became flesh; God did not make Christ to become anything at any other time. And this implies that the becoming sin and the becoming flesh were one and the same act. What more, therefore, can be required by way of proof that Christ, when He became of the seed of David, *became flesh* OF SIN? It is also evident that the aorist "did not know" (μὴ γνόντα), cannot be taken as contemporaneous with the aorist "made" (ἐποίησεν); although theologians, who never scruple to attribute the baldest contradictions to a Scripture writer when, by so doing, they can gain any semblance of support for their favourite theories, assume almost without exception, and as a matter of course, that it must be so taken. To say that God did or could make Christ to become sin while He continued sinless (which is what is meant by τὸν μὴ γνόντα ἁμαρτίαν when taken as contemporaneous with ἐποίησεν ἁμαρτίαν) is neither more nor less absurd than to say that God could make an Ethiopian to become white while he continued black; and it is equally absurd to say that a person could become righteous while he continued sinful. Is it alleged that Christ was made sinful in one respect while He continued sinless in another? In that case we must ask what are the respects? The standard of righteousness and sin, perfection and imperfection, is the Divine law. Now, a piece of paper may appear black to one eye and white to another at the same time. It will then be black with respect to the one, and white with respect to the other. But the same identical piece of paper cannot be at once black and white with respect to the same eye. No more can the same identical person be at once perfect and imperfect with respect to the same standard of perfection. In what respect, then, was Christ sinful, and in what respect did He remain sinless? The only possible answer is that He was sinful *in respect to His flesh* (κατὰ σάρκα), and that He remained sinless *in respect to His Spirit* (κατὰ πνεῦμα)—which is all that I at present contend for.

The same solution must likewise be accepted in the case of the believer, if contemporaneous sinfulness and righteousness be insisted on in his case also. Yet the text before us is constantly quoted as a triumphant proof of the doctrine of imputation! Some enraptured imputationists assure us that they "see imputation everywhere, and see it most of all in a text where the word impute does not occur." Clear-sighted souls! They would see spots on a snowflake! I prefer to take the aorist participle *γνόντα* as past with reference to the aorist indicative *ἐποίησεν*. It is too little to say that the grammar *admits* (cf. vii. 12; John v. 29, *al.*), while both the sense and the parallelism *demand*, this construction, for the grammar appears to me to demand it, as well as the sense and the parallelism. If the apostle had meant to represent Christ as continuing (in whatever respect) the Sinless One *after* God made Him sin, he would have used, not the aorist participle (*τὸν μὴ γνόντα*), but the present participle (*τὸν μὴ γινώσκοντα*), which is the proper tense for designating permanent or timeless character (Gal. ii. 2; 1 Thess. i. 10; 1 Pet. i. 17; Heb. ii. 11; Rom. v. 17; John xii. 20, *al.*, and see Winer, E. T. (Moulton), pp. 444, 445). If he meant to represent Christ as having been sinless only *before* God made Him sin, he has done so, not merely in the proper and most natural, but (with participial construction) *in the only possible way*, since the Greek has no pluperfect participle.

As to the notion favoured by some writers that the word "sin" (*ἁμαρτίαν*) is to be understood in the sense of "sin-offering," this can only be regarded and characterised as the last resource of exegetical despair. Besides that it is linguistically unwarrantable, being entirely without parallel, it would compel us in consistency to read the verse as follows:—"Him who had not known a sin-offering He made a sin-offering on our behalf in Adam, in order that we who had not known a righteous-offering might become a righteous-offering of God in Him." Parallels to this might be sought in "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, *holy*, well pleasing to God" (Rom. xii. 1), and "That the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, *being sanctified* by the Holy Ghost" (xv. 16), &c., but few, I imagine, will be disposed to contend that it is the

correct view of the passage. And besides, even on such a view, the antithesis between sin-offering and righteous-offering would be meaningless, unless the body of Christ were sinful in contrast to the spirits of believers that are holy. The apostle's language must therefore be understood in its natural sense as above explained, and the verse proves conclusively that the flesh of Christ was identical in moral quality, as in everything else, with ordinary human flesh from which he is said to have derived it—it proves, in one word, that it was flesh *of sin*. Further evidence in support of the same conclusion will be brought out in connection with the passage next to be examined.

On the whole, therefore, it is beyond doubt that the meaning of Rom. i. 4 is accurately expressed by the paraphrase: "Who was determined to be the Son of Man in weakness, as regards his flesh of sin, by death, who was determined to be the Son of God in power, as regards his spirit of holiness, by resurrection." The word "determined" (*ὁρισθέντος*), as the context plainly shows, means "defined by evidence," "demonstrated," "proved." The apostle does not say that Christ "*was determined* to be the Son of Man . . . by death," because he could take it for granted that his readers were satisfied of the fact on historical grounds, prior to and quite independent of Christ's death. I have said so, because the truth is a Scriptural, and even a self-evident one, as much so, at least, as is the antithetic truth in the other clause, which it serves to illustrate and define, and because modern theologians, unlike the apostle's readers, require to be reminded of it.

This, then, must suffice by way of exposition of the present passage. For I will not detain the reader by discussing the notion that "Spirit of holiness" refers, not to the Divine nature of Christ at all, but to the third person of the Trinity, considered as quite distinct from Christ's Divine nature. Whether, in what sense, or to what extent the third person of the Trinity is identical with the Divine nature of Christ, is a question which it is hardly worth while to investigate (*cf.* however, 2 Cor. iii. 17; Rom. viii. 9, 10), for, besides being purely speculative, it has only an indirect and somewhat



remote bearing on my present argument. But that "Spirit of holiness" answers to "flesh" of sin, and that the former indicates the Divine nature of Christ as the latter indicates the human, is proved simply by being stated. The man who disputes *that* at this time of day will dispute anything, and has yet to be put through his first lesson in Scripture exegesis.

The other passage to which reference was made is viii. 3, 4—a passage which we have quoted indeed oftener than once already, but which it is necessary to examine somewhat more minutely. "For [to give the *rationale* of our deliverance from the principle of sin, and by consequence from condemnation], what the law could not do [*scil.* make men righteous—the end at which it avowedly aimed (x. 4; Gal. iii. 21)], in that it was weak through the flesh [of sin—the flesh, whose mind is enmity against God, and which is not subject to the law of God neither indeed can be (v. 7),—was done when] God, having sent His own Son in the likeness of flesh of sin, and concerning sin [=veiled in the flesh of sin, which prevented men from attaining to righteousness by fulfilling the law—an obstacle which it was the purpose of His mission to remove], condemned [to death] the sin in the flesh [and thereby brought it to nought (Eph. ii. 15, 16)], that so the righteousness required [and aimed at] by the law might be fulfilled in us [the sin in whose flesh has been condemned to death and brought to nought in death after the likeness of Christ's (vi. 5, 6), and] who [therefore (vi. 4, 8)] walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." The present passage resembles the previous to this extent that it contains a succinct outline of the plan of salvation. The problem to be solved is how men may be delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son, how they may be brought out of their old state of slavery to sin in the flesh, into a new state of slavery to righteousness in the spirit. By nature men are in the flesh, which is essentially characterised by sin, and at enmity with God, and renders the law impossible for them to fulfil in their own natural strength. This implies that the salvation of men is something which the law cannot do. Salvation is τὸ ἀδύνατον τοῦ νόμου.

How then are men actually saved? Not by the law, but by the Spirit of grace and of life (v. 2), which becomes theirs through the incarnation and death of Jesus Christ. For God so loved the world that He sent His own Son into the fleshly state of men, with a view to redeeming them out of that state, and bringing them into His own holy spiritual state. Redemption is effected first on the person of Christ Himself, and then on the person of each believer after the example of Christ, and in all cases it is effected through death. Christ's death in the flesh, like every other death in the flesh, was the expression of the judgment (*—ἐκρίνε*) of God against (*κατ—*) sin (vi. 10); it embodied the penalty of the law, under whose curse Christ had become (Gal. iii. 13), when He became flesh (iv. 4), and, in so doing, became sin (2 Cor. v. 21); it was the outcome of the reciprocal enmity (*ἐχθρα*) between man on the one side (Rom. viii. 7) and God on the other (Eph. ii. 15), which the sin in the flesh could not but create; and it was the means of bringing to nought the sin in the flesh (Rom. vi. 6), and so of bringing to nought the enmity inseparable therefrom (Eph. ii. 15, 16), and of producing mutual reconciliation between men and God, when that which has been effected in principle on the person of Christ, shall be effected in detail on the persons of all believers after the likeness of Christ.

Such are the essential points in the plan of salvation, as briefly indicated in these two verses. The ideas are quite the same as we found were contained in chap. i. 3, 4; only, here the human side, the incarnation and death of Christ, receives the prominence, there the Divine side, His spiritualisation and resurrection; so that the two passages serve at once to supplement and to elucidate one another. There is also the closest parallelism between the present text and Gal. iv. 4, 5, whose correspondence to 2 Cor. v. 21 has been already exhibited. "When the fulness of the time came, God [= 'God'] sent forth [= 'having sent'] His Son [= 'His own Son'], born of a woman [= 'in the likeness of flesh of sin'], born under *the curse of the law on account of sin* [= 'condemned the sin in the flesh'] that He might redeem them which were *born of woman and therefore born under the curse of the*

law on account of sin [= 'with a view to *abolishing* sin in the flesh which prevented men from attaining to righteousness by fulfilling the law'], that we might receive the adoption along with the spirit of sons [= 'that the righteousness required by the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh of slaves, but after the spirit of sons']."] That the flesh, the weakness of which disables men from fulfilling the law, is *characterised* by sin is not less clear than it is that the spirit, the power of which enables men to fulfil the law, is *characterised* by righteousness. The apostle himself teaches this in terms whose meaning cannot be mistaken. "They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, and they that are after the spirit the things of the spirit. For the mind of the flesh is death, but the mind of the spirit is life and peace; because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be, and they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (vv. 5-8). Nothing could express more clearly than do these words the fact that "the flesh," as the apostle knows and represents it, is naturally and necessarily opposed to the will or law of God, and therefore subject to its curse or penalty. "The flesh," as such, is "flesh of sin," while "the spirit," as such, is "spirit of holiness." To be "in the flesh" implies being under sin, just as to be "in the spirit" implies being under righteousness. The apostle knows of no flesh that is not "flesh of sin." He says not one word about "flesh" having once been "flesh of holiness," much less does he say that "flesh" can again be made "flesh of holiness." What he says plainly implies the opposite; for he teaches that to be "in the flesh" and to be subject to the law of God are *absolutely incompatible*; the only possible way in which one can be freed from sin is by being *freed from the flesh*, in which sin inheres; to be holy one must be "in the spirit," and *have the flesh brought to nought*. The verses last quoted have no meaning whatever, unless this be what they mean. And if this be what they mean, then it will be easy to settle the precise force of the clauses "in the likeness of flesh of sin—and concerning sin—condemned the sin in the flesh," about which so many idle fancies have been propounded by "orthodox" commentators.

To begin with the first. "In the likeness of flesh of sin" differs from "in the likeness of the flesh," not in substance, but merely in form—viz., in the circumstance that whereas in the former the characteristic quality of the flesh is expressed explicitly, in the latter it is expressed implicitly, and the apostle uses the explicit in preference to the implicit form because it is the characteristic quality (*ἀμαρτία*) with which he is mainly concerned, as may be inferred from the fact that it appears in abstraction as soon as we pass to the clauses that follow. Now that the word "likeness" (*ὁμολοῖμα*) here used *may* denote likeness amounting to substantial identity, as opposed to mere semblance and substantial unlikeness, does not require to be said. The word is used in four other passages of the apostle's writings (Rom. i. 23 ; v. 14 ; vi. 5 ; Phil. ii. 7), and in every one of these cases the identity denoted is practically absolute. In the three first especially—indeed, unless I am much mistaken, in all the four—the substantial identity between the things compared is the sole foundation on which the author's reasoning rests. So much will be admitted even by my opponents ; and, therefore, the only question that can possibly be raised is whether the word "likeness" *does actually* bear this sense when applied to the flesh assumed by Christ. And this is a question that is no sooner asked than it is answered. In the present passage, where Christ is said to have become "*in the likeness of flesh* (of sin)" the language may be thought susceptible of more than one meaning, but the same cannot possibly be alleged of other passages where the language is different, and absolutely unambiguous. Elsewhere it is said that Christ "became flesh" (John i. 14), that "since the children are sharers of flesh and blood, He Himself also in like manner partook of the same [flesh and blood]" (Heb. ii. 14), that He "became of woman" (Gal. iv. 4)—"became of the seed of David as regards His flesh" (Rom. i. 3)—that He was sent by God the Father to reconcile all things unto Himself "in the body of His flesh through death" (Col. i. 19-22), that in putting off "the body of the flesh" men are circumcised with the circumcision of Christ (ii. 11), that Christ abolished "in His flesh" the enmity between man and God (Eph. ii. 15, 16), that He



was manifested "in the flesh" and justified "in the spirit" (1 Tim. iii. 16), that He suffered "in the flesh" and ceased from sin (1 Peter iv. 1), being put to death "through the flesh" but quickened "through the spirit" (iii. 18), even as the dead, though they have been judged "after the manner of men in the flesh," may nevertheless live "after the manner of God in the spirit" (iv. 6), that He carried our sins "in His body" up to the tree (ii. 24), that we are made dead to the law "through the body of Christ" (Rom. vii. 4)—His "body of sin" (vi. 6)—that we enter the holy place "through the veil, that is to say, His flesh" (Heb. x. 20), and much more of precisely the same nature. These passages not only render it perfectly manifest that the flesh of Christ was real human flesh, identical with that of other men in every respect—herein *implying* that it was pervaded by sin as the flesh of other men is—but they prove besides, in the most *explicit* manner, that His flesh was opposed to His spirit as something morally different, and that the former was the seat and source of His (derived) sin and death, as the latter was the seat and source of His (original) righteousness and life. There is not even a trace of the idea that the flesh of Christ was only apparent or seeming, or that it differed in moral quality or anything else from ordinary human flesh.

Here, however, we are met with a challenge. If the flesh of Christ was nothing less or more than ordinary flesh, identical in moral quality, as in everything else, with that of all other men, why did not the apostle, instead of writing "in the likeness of flesh of sin," write simply "in flesh of sin"? If the word "likeness" does not point to dissimilarity between the flesh of Christ and that of ordinary men, in respect that the former was not while the latter is characterised by sin, what conceivable reason can the apostle have had for using the word at all? Several answers may be given. In the first place, one may surely retort by asking in turn why, if the apostle meant to represent the flesh of Christ as differing from that of ordinary men, in respect that the former was characterised by holiness, while the latter is characterised by sin, why did he not, instead of writing "in the likeness of flesh of sin," write simply "in flesh of holiness," as he elsewhere writes

“Spirit of holiness,” when this would have expressed *exactly* what he meant. Why should the apostle have expressed himself in language, the natural meaning of which is as “like” as possible the reverse of what he intends, when language whose natural meaning is identical with what he intends was so familiar to him? To say that Christ was sent in the likeness of flesh, whose characteristic is sin, is surely a very odd way of stating that He was sent in flesh, characterised not by sin, but by holiness—just as odd as it would be to say that a man appeared in the likeness of a black negro, when the meaning was that a white negro made his appearance. How can it be pretended, that “in the likeness of flesh of sin” is identical in meaning with “in flesh of sinlessness,” or “in flesh of holiness”? There is a world of difference between the two expressions. Even allowing, for argument’s sake, that the word “likeness” points to dissimilarity between the flesh of Christ and that of ordinary men, what right have we to infer that the dissimilarity consists just in the absence of the characteristic quality—nothing else, nothing more, and nothing less? The apostle gives us plainly to understand that ordinary flesh cannot exist without the characteristic quality—that if the characteristic quality is to be brought to nought, the flesh itself must be brought to nought along with it (viii. 7, 8; vi. 6, &c.). How then dare we allege that the flesh of Christ was unreal to the extent that it lacked the characteristic quality, *and no further*? What warrant is there for making the word “likeness” apply to “sin,” but not to “flesh,” in other words, for holding the writer’s meaning to be that the flesh of Christ was real flesh, only it *seemed* to be characterised by sin, which really it was not? Is there any historical ground for thinking that the flesh of Christ *seemed* to possess qualities (whether moral or physical) which it really did not possess? If not, the apostle must be stating as fact what has no historical foundation. But *does* the apostle state any such thing? We certainly cannot infer it from the proximity of the different words. For though both the English versions (the Revised contrary to its usual practice, and evidently under dogmatic bias—witness the still more violent treatment of the following clause), translate the apostle’s phrase, “flesh of sin”

(σάρκος ἁμαρτίας) into "sinful flesh," and though this, by bringing the words "likeness" and "sin" into immediate juxtaposition, has the effect of lending a certain air of plausibility to the opinion I am now contesting, the fact that the order, and with it the meaning of the words, is just the reverse in the original from what it is in the Vss., proves incontestably that if any inference is to be founded thereon, it must be an inference the exact opposite of that which the Vss. appear to countenance—that is to say, we must infer *that the flesh was unreal, but not the sin*. The same conclusion might be supported as the preferable one by reference to the exigencies of the writer's argument; for, as we shall see presently, however the flesh of Christ may have differed from ordinary human flesh in other respects, it is essential to the apostle's argument that it should have resembled ordinary human flesh in the circumstance that it was pervaded by the principle of sin, since in any other case that principle could not have been condemned and brought to nought when Christ died, as the apostle asserts that it was.

But further, those who understand the word "likeness" to denote semblance, who make it apply exclusively to the word "sin," which occurs not indeed in the closest, but still in close proximity thereto, and who challenge us to assign any other reason for the apostle's using the word "likeness" at all, ought in consistency to apply the same rule of interpretation, and to throw out the same challenge, when the word "likeness" occurs under exactly similar circumstances, but *apart from the word sin*. If they were to do this, they might discover that their line of argument will prove somewhat more than they are prepared to accept. Whether we can assign a satisfactory reason for the apostle's using the word "likeness" remains to be seen: we shall, at anyrate, find it easy enough to show that the reason assigned by those who challenge us to do so is so far from being satisfactory that, if carried out to its legitimate issues, it would have the effect of disproving *both* the true humanity *and* the true divinity of Jesus Christ. It so happens that there exists one other passage in Paul's writings where the word "likeness" occurs in a precisely similar

construction, and where it is alternated with two other words expressing substantially the same idea,—a passage, too, that is so closely parallel to the one before us that reasoning from the one to the other is a matter of course; and if we interpret the word “likeness” there in the way that it is proposed to interpret it here, if, besides, we take into account the effect of such an interpretation on the whole connection, then we shall be obliged to conclude, not only that the humanity which Christ assumed was apparent or seeming, and not real humanity, but also that the divinity which He for a time and to a large extent demitted was apparent or seeming, and not real divinity—this latter in defiance of the plain statement of the passage that the original divinity of Christ constituted Him the equal of God. We must again allow the apostle to speak for himself:—“Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being [originally] in the form of God, counted not [His] equality with God a thing to be grasped [and retained], but [on the contrary] emptied Himself [of the substance, while divesting Himself of the form, of Godhead], taking the form [along with the substance] of a slave [to sin and by consequence to death], becoming [that is to say] *in the likeness of men* (*ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων* = *ἐν ὁμοιώματι σάρκος ἁμαρτίας*), and [in consequence of] being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself [= submitted to the trials and indignities incident to sinful humanity], becoming obedient [in the midst of suffering (Heb. v. 8)] even unto death, yea, the death of the cross. Wherefore God also [on His part as righteous Judge] highly exalted Him, and granted unto Him the name that is above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. ii. 5-11). It is evident that we have here on the part of Christ the same course, first of humiliation and then of exaltation, which we find sketched more or less fully in Rom. i. 3, 4, in Rom. viii. 3, 4, in Gal. iv. 4, 5, in 2 Cor. v. 21, and in many other passages. In all these passages, and in others like them, Christ is represented as passing through a process of incarnation and redemption in the char-



acter of the leader, the type or exemplar, of every believer, and as each passage gives special prominence to some part or parts of the process which is less prominent in the others, they are all more or less illustrative and supplementary of one another. Nothing, therefore, could be more legitimate than to interpret the statements of one, by the corresponding, but more detailed, or more closely defined, statements of another. Now, when the apostle says that Christ "became in the likeness of men," and when he varies this expression by saying that He "took the form of a slave," it cannot be alleged that the word "likeness" (*ὁμοίωμα*) is used to indicate that the humanity of Christ was merely apparent; for this would imply that the word "form" (*μορφή*) is used to indicate that the slavehood of Christ was merely apparent; and this again would imply that the apostle, in saying that Christ "was originally *in the form* of God," instead of saying that He "was originally God," meant to indicate that Christ's divinity was merely apparent—a position that is directly falsified by the very next clause, which bears that he "counted not *His equality with God* a thing to be grasped" and retained, as well as by the statement that He "*emptied Himself*," which, like the correlative "fill," "fulness," &c., must apply to substance, and not to mere manifestation. Least of all can it be pretended that the word "likeness" points to the unreality of Christ's humanity *in respect that it was sinless*, for then consistency will require, not only that the word "form" shall be held to point to the unreality of Christ's slavehood *in respect that it was sinless*, but also that "in the form of God" shall be held to point to the unreality of His original Godhead *in respect that it was sinful*! Such assumptions are not merely utterly arbitrary, and without the smallest warrant in the text, but they are utterly opposed alike to the sense of the words and to the whole connection of ideas. The word "slave" of itself is sufficient to prove that the flesh of Christ, like that of all other men, was pervaded by the principle of sin, for it is clear from the context that the word is used in the sense which it bears in Rom. vi., and that the slavery referred to is slavery *to the principle of sin*, and to death as the penalty due to that principle. The language of v. 8,

in particular, indicates quite plainly that the death of Christ was the direct effect of His human nature as such, which it could not have been, unless that human nature had placed Him under the penalty of the law, on account of sin inherent in it. We may take it, therefore, as an absolute certainty that the word "likeness," in the phrase "in the likeness of men," does *not* mean that the human nature of Christ was unreal or merely apparent in any respect, and least of all in respect that it was sinless. And this again must be held to prove decisively that the same word "likeness," in the phrase "in the likeness of flesh of sin," was *not* meant to exclude the idea that Christ assumed real and not merely apparent flesh of sin; least of all, as the sequel shows, was it meant to convey the idea that the flesh of Christ was real, but the sin merely apparent.

But this, after all, is only a negative result, and negative results, however firmly established, are never wholly satisfactory to the mind. What was the proper positive reason why the apostle made use of the phrase "in the likeness" with reference to Christ's human nature, both in Rom. viii. 3 and in Phil. ii. 7? That the expression cannot be due to mere rhetorical amplification of style is evident from the fact that it appears in both the passages referred to, and that in the latter of the two it is virtually repeated several times, showing that the writer not only has an idea, but that his idea is one of very considerable importance—one which the reader cannot afford to overlook. The reason, it need scarcely be said, is one that lies on the surface of the passages where the expression occurs. Both passages represent Christ as having been originally the Son and equal of God. In this it is implied that He was immeasurably raised above man as he at present exists. And though the second states that in becoming man He "emptied Himself"—a process the limits of which must be here left by us, as they are by the apostle, undefined—still the emptied self (we may not say "form," for that He had resigned) of Godhead was united in the totality of His person to the form of manhood from the first moment of the incarnation. And as we learn from various indications (Luke ii. 40, 52, *cf.* Eph. iii. 16; Luke iii. 21, 22; iv. 1, *cf.* Col. ii.

11, 12 ; Eph. iv. 13, *cf.* Heb. ii. 10 ; v. 8-14 ; vi. 1, *seq.* ; vii. 28), as we might have inferred, at any rate, from analogy to the case of the believer (Col. ii. 9, 10 ; Eph. iii. 19 ; ii. 20, 21 ; iv. 12-16, &c.), this emptied self of Godhead continued during His earthly life to be refilled and to grow till, on His ascension to glory, He was again, as He had been before (John xvii. 5), "filled unto all the fulness of God" (Eph. iii. 19), so that it could be said, "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. ii. 9, *cf.* Eph. i. 23 ; John i. 16). It follows that Christ during His earthly life was an ordinary man indeed, but also *something more*. He possessed a human nature with all its ordinary characteristics (sin included), and this placed Him absolutely on a level with us, so that He could be said to have both the form and the substance of slavehood, just as before the incarnation He had had both the form and the substance of Godhead. But in addition to this human nature, common to Him with all other men, He possessed a Divine nature—emptied, it might be, and depotentiated, but all the same a Divine nature—peculiar to Himself and to such other men as are conformed to His image. Yet He did not *seem* to be anything more than an ordinary man. His Divine nature was *deformed* to such an extent that the outward eye failed to detect it. He was therefore *like* an ordinary man, as far as outward *form* or *fashion* was concerned. This is simply an historical fact. The mass of His contemporaries could not be brought to believe that He was in any respect different from one of themselves. And the same holds true of His followers as well as Himself. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called children of God ; and such we are. *For this cause the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not.* Beloved, now are we children of God, and *it is not yet made manifest what we shall be*" (1 John iii. 1, 2). Hence, when the apostle says that Christ was sent "in the likeness of flesh of sin," that He "took the form of a slave, became in the likeness of men, and was found in fashion as a man," his meaning evidently is that the Divine nature of Christ was so overshadowed and concealed by the human that men could hardly help taking Him for an ordinary human being and

*nothing more.* Thus far the words of the paraphrase express the apostle's meaning admirably:—

“ His greatness He for us abased,  
For us His glory veiled,  
In human *likeness* dwelt on earth,  
His majesty concealed.”

In reality, Christ was something more than an ordinary human being, and it is this fact that the word “likeness” is used to express. The word does not point to the fact that Christ's flesh of sin was something less than ordinary, something less than it appeared to be—that it seemed to possess characteristics which it really did not possess ; but rather to the fact that His spirit of holiness was something more than ordinary, something more than it appeared to be—that it really existed, and conferred a character on Christ which He did not seem to possess. So far is the word “likeness” from being meant to suggest that Christ's flesh of sin was unreal, or that it lacked any of the characteristics of ordinary flesh of sin, that it is meant to bring into the boldest relief its intense reality and prominence, which was such as to obliterate and shut out of view the fact that He had any other higher nature. There is, therefore, not a shadow of reason for the allegation, so often and so confidently made, that, according to the passage before us, the flesh of Christ differed from ordinary human flesh in respect that it was *not* characterised by sin ; on the contrary, there is every reason, lexical, grammatical, and (as I shall show immediately) contextual, for holding that the flesh of Christ resembled ordinary human flesh in every respect, and, most of all, in respect that it *was* characterised by sin.

So much for the first of the three clauses. The others will be more easily disposed of. In the second clause, “and concerning sin,” the word “sin” takes up “sin” of the clause preceding, and is in turn taken up by “the sin” of the clause following ; indeed, as already remarked, the apostle used the explicit form, “flesh *of sin*,” instead of “flesh” or “the flesh,” for no other reason than because—not the flesh in all its bearings, but—specifically and exclusively *the sin* in the flesh was to be taken up and dealt with in the two succeeding clauses.



That the principle of sin, inherent in human flesh in general, and in the flesh of Christ in particular, is the thing referred to throughout is so obvious, in view of the whole context, that nothing but the most resolute determination to dispute and repel that idea at all hazards could blind any one to the plain meaning of the apostle's words. It is objected that, if the apostle had used the word "likeness" to indicate the presence of Christ's Divine nature under the veil of His human nature, the latter would, in that case, have been spoken of, not as "flesh of sin," but simply as "flesh," after the precedent set in i. 3. But I have just explained why the apostle here uses the explicit form "flesh of sin," instead of the implicit form "flesh" used in i. 3, and the reason given will, I believe, satisfy every man having the slightest claim to impartiality. Let any reader reflect how immensely the apostle's statement would lose in clearness and force if the word "sin" in the opening clause were omitted, and then he will *feel* the reasonableness of my explanation. It is next asserted that, in order to obtain a *suitable* meaning out of the clause "and concerning sin," we must transform it completely by supplying the words "as an offering," when it will read "and as an offering for sin." But to supply "as an offering," in order to obtain a *suitable* meaning, is a piece of wanton and intolerable caprice, which those who perpetrate it make hardly any attempt to justify. Neither in the meanings of the individual words, nor in the connection of ideas, nor in parallel passages elsewhere, is there the smallest warrant for so violent a proceeding. How could the apostle have omitted a phrase, the insertion or omission of which would, if it were taken literally, alter so entirely the meaning of the whole clause, and, with it, of the whole verse? Besides, the presence of the interpolated words, so far from affording a *suitable* meaning, has the effect of changing what was before perfectly clear into what is absolutely unintelligible. The *suitable* meaning which the words are inserted to obtain is a meaning presupposing that the flesh in which Christ was sent was *not* flesh of sin, but flesh of holiness, and as we have just proved that the flesh in which Christ was sent *was* flesh of sin, and not flesh of holiness, such a meaning is necessarily a wholly *unsuitable* one. The preceding clause, when

taken in its natural sense, is as completely at variance with the proposed interpolation, as it is completely in harmony with the simple sense of the words as they stand; and the mutual harmony of the two clauses, when taken as we have taken them, as it justifies the natural interpretation of both, so it condemns every forced interpretation of either. And, if this be true of the clause that precedes, it is still more true of the clause that follows. For, taking the words in their plain and obvious meaning, it is quite impossible to understand how God could have "condemned the sin in the flesh" when he inflicted the penalty of death upon Christ, if Christ was sent simply as a sin-offering, and if there was no sin in his flesh to condemn. Another complete distortion of the natural sense is therefore necessary, if the apostle is not to be convicted of writing absolute nonsense. Accordingly, it is alleged that we must understand "the sin"—which takes up "sin" of the previous clause—of "the mass of human guilt," and connect "in the flesh," not with "the sin" at all, but with the verb "condemned;" so that the meaning of the whole clause would be expressed by saying, "God condemned in the flesh of Christ the mass of human guilt." But even if this were intelligible, how utterly arbitrary it is! How do we know that either "sin" in the second clause or "the sin" in the third refers to "the mass of human guilt"? Surely it will not be pretended that "flesh of sin" in the first clause means "flesh of the mass of human guilt," and, if not, how can any one be expected to believe that the word "sin" in the other two clauses bears a meaning so extraordinary? The whole context is directly opposed to such an idea, while the idea itself, as was shown previously, is beset with difficulties so enormous, that nothing but the most overwhelming contextual evidence could induce us even to take it into consideration. Again, where is the warrant for disconnecting "in the flesh" from "the sin," to which it stands in immediate proximity? The article, we are told, is not repeated between sin and flesh (*τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τὴν ἐν τῇ σαρκί*). But the absence of the article merely suggests that the connection between "the sin" and "the flesh" is an invariable one, while its presence would suggest that the connection was a variable one—that is to say, the presence of the article would

have suggested what the apostle did *not* mean, while its absence suggests *exactly* what he *does* mean (*cf.* Winer, E. T., pp. 169, 170). Even, however, were we to indulge caprice so far as to allow the jerrymandering to be carried out without the assignment of any reason whatever, what is the meaning of “condemned *in the flesh* of Christ the mass of human guilt”? The word “condemn” (κατακρίνω), which is a return on “condemnation” (κατάκριμα) of v. 1, means adjudge to death; but how can God be said to have adjudged the mass of human guilt to death *in the flesh* of Christ? The meaning cannot be that the mass of human guilt is absolutely identical with the flesh of Christ, so that when the latter was adjudged to death, the former was adjudged to death; for this is utterly absurd. Neither can the meaning be that the mass of human guilt has its seat in the flesh of Christ, as the principle of sin has its seat in the flesh of ordinary men; for this is equally absurd; guilt, being simply the relation of sin to the law, is not a thing that can be seated anywhere. Now, when these two meanings are set aside, the possibility of assigning a definite intelligible meaning to the above combination of words appears to be quite taken away. Besides all which, we must bear in mind the results obtained in earlier chapters of this work. It has, I hope, been conclusively proved, that if the word sin-offering, or any similar word, be applied to the work of Christ in saving the world, it can be understood only in a purely figurative sense, and must have its meaning defined through the medium of literal language, occurring either in the immediate context or in parallel passages elsewhere. How preposterous is it, therefore, to insist on arbitrarily supplying a word which, even were it expressed, would leave the interpretation of the whole passage precisely where it was!

These difficulties are felt so strongly by many of the commentators, that they prefer other, though scarcely more warrantable, expedients for the purpose of explaining away the obvious meaning of the apostle's language. It is held, for example, that “the sin in the flesh” does not refer to the sin attaching to the person of Christ at all, but rather to the sin attaching to the persons of believers. The word “condemn” does not mean “adjudge to death,” at least in the ordinary sense, but

Christ, by living a holy life in holy flesh, "somehow or other did something or other that had some connection or other" with the deliverance of men from the dominion of sin, and *in that sense* (!) He "condemned the sin in the flesh" of men. On this view, it was not God that condemned sin by adjudging Christ to death—the condemnation of sin had no special connection with the death of Christ: it was Christ Himself that condemned sin, and this He did, not by His death, but by His lifelong obedience. All this, however, is manifestly an utter perversion of the apostle's language. The word "condemn" (κατακρίνω) has the same definite meaning in v. 3 which the word "condemnation" (κατάκριμα) has in v. 1, and that the act of condemnation consisted in the adjudging of Christ to death is self-evident, for, on the one hand, there is nothing else to which the expression can possibly refer, and, on the other hand, it is certain that the death of Christ was a judicial penalty, the outcome of such a sentence of condemnation as is here referred to. Further proof of the same position will be forthcoming presently.

The real meaning of the apostle's words is that which lies on their very surface, and which can by no possibility be explained away. "The sin in the flesh" is the principle of sin inherent in human flesh as such, and therefore inherent in the human flesh which Christ assumed, and this was "condemned" to death and brought to nought in death, when God condemned to death and brought to nought in death the human flesh of Christ. It is objected that, if this were his meaning, the apostle would have written, not "in *the* flesh" (ἐν τῇ σαρκί), but "in *His* flesh" (ἐν τῇ σαρκί αὐτοῦ), so as to make the reference more clear. But this objection only betrays the incorrigible perverseness of those who raise it. The apostle did not say "in *His* flesh," because to have done so would not have expressed the precise meaning which he intended to convey. The whole drift of the argument, and particularly the statement of purpose contained in v. 4, makes it abundantly manifest that the apostle views the flesh of Christ, not as an isolated self-centred unit, unconnected with anything else, but as a *sample* (ἀπαρχή) of human flesh generally—of "*the* flesh," whose weakness renders fulfilment of the law impossible (v. 3a)



—and that he regards the destruction of sin in the leading case of Christ as the destruction *in principle* of sin in the whole human race, or at least in the whole body of the redeemed. That being so, his use of the general form of expression “in *the* flesh,” which re-echoes “through *the* flesh” in the opening clause of the verse, was fitted to convey his meaning more exactly than any other possible form. Moreover, it is easy to produce parallel passages, where the apostle *does* employ the pronominal adjective “His,” and where it is as clear as day *both* that the flesh in which sin was condemned is the flesh of Christ, *and* that the sentence of condemnation was carried out and consummated in the process of Christ’s death ; and yet, I suppose, the objectors will not be satisfied.

Take, for instance, the following from Ephesians : “For He is our peace, who made both the [Jews and Gentiles] one, and brake down the middle wall of partition, having brought to nought the enmity *in His flesh*—the law of commandments contained in ordinances—in order that He might create the two in [union with] Himself into one new man, so making peace, and might reconcile them both in one [spiritual] body unto God *through the cross*, having slain the enmity thereby ; and [in virtue of what He had done] He came and preached peace to you [the Gentiles] that were far off, and peace to them [the Jews] that were nigh ; for through Him [as leader of salvation and giver of the Holy Ghost (Acts v. 31 ; ii. 33)] we both have our access in one Spirit unto the Father” (ii. 14-18). “The enmity in His [Christ’s] flesh,” which formed, as long as it existed, the barrier to reconciliation between him and God [*cf.* “The mind of the flesh is *enmity* against God,” &c. (Rom. viii. 7)], and which Christ “slew” and “brought to nought” “through His cross” (vv. 15, 16), is evidently identical with “the sin in the flesh” which God “condemned” when Christ died (Rom. viii. 3), since the condemnation, death, and consequent destruction of both these things stand in exactly the same relation to the reception of the Spirit as the instrument of renewal by all believers (vv. 17, 18 ; Rom. viii. 4). The apostle, indeed, in this, as well as in other passages, would fain make out that “the sin in the flesh” exists as a cause of enmity between men and God merely in

consequence of the existence of the letter of the law, and hence he represents "the law of commandments contained in ordinances," not only as the main cause of enmity between Jews and Gentiles, but as the main cause of enmity between men and God,—he identifies it, in fact, with "the [cause of] enmity in the flesh" (v. 15). But we had occasion already, in connection with the opening paragraph of Rom. vii., to point out in what sense this is, and in what sense it is not, true. In the apostle's day—the day of enmity between Jew and Gentile—when the ceremonial law overshadowed the moral, and lay as a stumbling block in the way of men's receiving by faith the promise of the Spirit, as the instrument of redemption from slavery to sin, "the law of commandments contained in ordinances," might truly be said, in that indirect sense, to cause, or at all events to perpetuate, the enmity which the principle of sin created between men and God. But the principle of sin, and with it the enmity between men and God, are as rife to-day as ever they were, though the ceremonial law (so far at least as the *Gentiles* are concerned) has long since been set aside as worthless; which proves that "the law of commandments contained in ordinances," was *not* the main cause, nor even an essential condition, of the enmity that existed between men and God—that, indeed, the two things had no necessary connection with one another. The real cause of the enmity which existed then, and which exists still, between men and God, was *the principle of sin*, inherent "in the flesh," and it was this, and this alone, that was really "brought to nought," through the crucifixion of Christ (Rom. vi. 6). The death of Christ had nothing whatever to do with the "bringing to nought" of "the law of commandments contained in ordinances," except in so far as a true spiritual apprehension of the significance of that death, opened the eyes of Paul to the fact that the *ceremonial part* of the law ought to be abrogated as unprofitable for saving purposes. The apostle's representation is based entirely on the state of things that had once existed in his own experience, and that still existed in the experience of his contemporaries; and it is directed to putting an end to that state of things. He wishes to induce his readers, both Jews and Gentiles, to cease from

seeking salvation by mechanical observance of the ceremonial law, apart from faith in God, and to begin, or continue, to seek salvation by spiritual observance of the moral law, through faith in God. With this object in view, he tries to show, though very unsuccessfully, that the law, especially the ceremonial law, is inseparably bound up with the existence and development of the principle of sin in the flesh, and that, consequently, it can be nothing else than a means of condemnation and death. The idea that when the principle of sin in the flesh of Christ was brought to nought in death, the law of commandments contained in ordinances was likewise brought to nought, is of course an inference from the more general idea, that there exists an inseparable connection between the law and the flesh wherein resides the principle of sin. The same idea is expressed very clearly in the parallel passage of Colossians: "Having blotted out the manuscript with the ordinances, that was against us, which was contrary to us, and He hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross; having put off from Himself the principalities and the powers [of darkness], He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it" (ii. 14, 15): Here, also, the putting off of the body of the flesh (v. 11), by which the principle of sin was brought to nought (v. 15), and reconciliation effected between men and God (i. 22), is identified with the taking out of the way of "the manuscript with the ordinances"—*i.e.*, the letter of the law—"which was contrary to us." "The blotting out of the manuscript with the ordinances," does not mean the cancelling of the sinner's debt. That is referred to by "having forgiven us all our trespasses" (v. 13). The same expression might readily enough be used, though there were no debt to cancel. It is quite identical in meaning with "the bringing to nought of the law of commandments contained in ordinances," as the mere fact of the parallelism is sufficient to prove, as appears at any rate from the argument of v. 16, and again of v. 20, *seq.* It refers, not to the cancelling of guilt, but to the setting aside as worthless of the letter of the law, which the apostle speaks of as having been nailed to the cross. It was not, however, really the letter of the law that was nailed to the cross, and so brought to nought, or

taken out of the way, but rather it was the principle of sin inherent in the flesh, through which the nails literally passed, and which is here and elsewhere regarded by the apostle as corresponding in nature to, and being inseparably bound up with the letter of the law, especially the ceremonial law. If this were not self-evident, it could not be more clearly proved than it is by the statement of v. 15, which is added as an explicative apposition to v. 14, and which teaches in so many words, that what Christ "put off from Himself" in the act of His death, was "the principalities and the powers" of evil, by which is meant the reigning principle of sin in the flesh. The verse has indeed been regarded as a profound enigma. Anything like definite interpretation of its meaning is usually either abandoned as hopeless, or a sense is put upon the words which the rules of grammar condemn. Certainly the language is very mysterious, and even wholly inexplicable, on the assumption that the flesh of Christ did not, like other human flesh, contain the principle of sin; but on the opposite assumption, it is as plain as any other passage in the apostle's writings. "Having put off from himself" (*ἀπεκδυσάμενος*), is manifestly a return upon "in the putting off" (*ἐν τῇ ἀπεκδύσει*) of the body of the flesh" (v. 11). What Christ put off from Himself was therefore "the body of His flesh through death" (i. 22). From which it follows that "the putting off of the principalities and the powers" of evil, over which Christ triumphed, and "the putting off of the body of the flesh," took place in one and the same act, viz., the act of His death on the cross. But this could have happened only if "the principalities and the powers" of evil were either *on* Christ's flesh adherently, or else *in* His flesh inherently. Surely it is not difficult to decide between these two. To suppose that evil powers and principalities were *on* Christ's flesh adherently, is nothing less than absurd, and even were it otherwise, the idea would be entirely without support, as well as without parallel. On the other hand, we know that ordinary men (including Christ) wrestle "against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Eph. vi. 12). And that these principalities



and powers, against which ordinary men (including Christ) wrestle, are *in* and not *on* the flesh, that they are either identical with, or, if not that, inseparably associated with the lusts of the flesh, against which the spirit wrestles and makes war (Gal. v. 17; Rom. vii. 23), comes out plainly in the opening verses of chap. ii., where we read: "And you [did he quicken with Christ (i. 19, 20)], when ye were dead in your trespasses and sins, wherein aforetime ye walked, *according to the course of this world* [*cf.* "the world-rulers of this darkness"], *according to the prince of the power* [*cf.* "the principalities and the powers"] *of the air, of the spirit that now worketh IN the sons of disobedience* [*cf.* "spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places"]; among whom we also all once lived, **IN THE LUSTS OF OUR FLESH**, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest":—a passage whose appositiveness cannot be disputed, since it forms, with the verses that follow, the exact counterpart of Col. ii. 11-15. The same truth is likewise taught with unmistakable clearness, when believers are said, in the identical language of our text, to have put off from themselves (*ἀπεκδυσάμενοι*) the old man with his doings" (Col. iii. 9)—a thing which, as we know from other passages (*e.g.*, Rom. vi. 6), and even from the context of the present (vv. 10, 11; *cf.* vv. 1-3), believers do with (= after the example of) Christ, so far as "the old man" is concerned, though not so far as "his doings" are concerned. How then is it possible to doubt that, as in the case of ordinary men, so in the case of Christ, "the principalities and the powers" against which He wrestled, and over which He triumphed, were so inseparably bound up with the sinful propensities in the flesh, that when He "put off from Himself" the one, He could also be said to have "put off from Himself" the other?

Another passage—and the only other with which I propose to trouble the reader—affording conclusive proof that "the sin in the flesh" which God condemned in connection with the death of Christ was the principle of sin inherent in the flesh which Christ had assumed, is contained in two separate verses of 1 Peter. "Christ also once suffered concerning sins, the righteous on behalf of the unrighteous, in order that He might

bring us [sinners] to God, having been put to death through [our] flesh [of sin], but made alive through [His] Spirit [of righteousness] . . . who His own self carried our sins in His body up to the tree, in order that we, having died [after His example in slavery] to our sins, might live [after His example in slavery] to His righteousness" (iii. 18; ii. 24). We pointed out before that the Apostle Peter's language, when speaking of the sufferings and death of Christ, is largely borrowed from Isaiah liii., and that in consequence it does not express his thought with perfect precision. For example, while Paul says, in Rom. viii. 3, that Christ was sent and suffered "concerning sin" (περὶ ἁμαρτίας), Peter says, in the present passage, that He was sent and suffered "concerning sins" (περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν). And again, while Paul says that God condemned human "sin" (τὴν ἁμαρτίαν) in the flesh of Christ, in order that we might walk not after the flesh with its sin, but after the spirit with its righteousness, Peter says that Christ carried our "sins" (τὰς ἁμαρτίας) in His body up to the tree, in order that we, having died to our body with its sins, might live to our (Christian) spirit with its righteousness. Yet nothing is more certain than that both writers refer to exactly the same thing—viz., the principle of sin, inherent in human flesh as such, and therefore inherent in the human flesh assumed by Christ, and carried by Him up to the tree. This is clear from the identity of relation which the death of Christ bears in both cases to the deliverance of the believer from slavery to the principle of sin and his consequent enslavement to the principle of righteousness; for if the death of Christ had not been a death in slavery to the principle of sin, followed by a resurrection in slavery to the principle of righteousness, how could the believer's death *after Christ's example* (ii. 21) have precisely such a character, as it is affirmed in Peter, not less than in Paul to have (ii. 24). It is clear, also, from the statement that Christ was "put to death *through the flesh* (θανάτωθεὶς σαρκὶ)," for that we are right in regarding the dative as instrumental (and not *merely* local) is evident from the requirements of the sense, from the parallelism to "made alive *through the Spirit* (ζωοποιηθεὶς πνεύματι)"—where the Spirit is indisputably the instrument

by which, and not merely the element in which, resurrection takes place (1 Cor. xv. 45 ; Rom. viii. 11)—and, above all, from such a text as this, “And if Christ is in you, the body is dead *because of sin*, but the spirit is life *because of righteousness*” (Rom. viii. 10), or this, “He was crucified *through weakness* [of the flesh of man], but He liveth *through power* [of the Spirit] of God” (2 Cor. xiii. 4). It is clear, finally, and more especially, from the apostle’s explicit and (in spite of theologians) unambiguous assertion that Christ “carried our sins *in His body* up to the tree.” Taken in connection with what immediately follows, these words can only mean that the principle of sin was *in* Christ’s body of flesh when it was raised to the cross, that He suffered on the cross in slavery to that principle, thereby escaping (*ἀπογενόμενος*) from under its mastery, that He was afterwards raised from the dead, thereby becoming enslaved to the principle of righteousness *in* the Spirit, and that in virtue of these experiences He can and does bestow His Spirit on all who believe on Him, in order that they, after His example, may die in slavery to the principle of sin in the flesh, and thereafter be raised in slavery to the principle of righteousness in the spirit. Once more, therefore, we have decisive evidence that what God condemned was the principle of sin in the flesh of Christ, and that the sentence of condemnation was executed in the process of Christ’s death.

May I not now take it for granted that the true interpretation of Rom. viii. 3 has been satisfactorily established, and vindicated against all assaults? May I not likewise assume that the more general question with which we set out, and which Rom. i. 3, 4, Rom. viii. 3, and the numerous illustrative passages were adduced to determine, has now been brought to a decisive issue? Will theologians and exegetes still continue to repeat the worn-out fable which finds expression in the following words of Meyer: “But that the Son of God was sent in *sinful* flesh would be a paradox opposed to the entire New Testament (!), which Paul *could* (!) by no means utter, and which, in fact, he with marked clearness and precision (!) guards against, by saying not *ἐν σαρκὶ ἁμαρτίας*, but *ἐν ὁμοιώματι σ. ἁμ.*, &c. (Rom. E. T., ii. 45)? I do not hesitate to say that the fact is just the other way about, and

that there will not be produced *a single New Testament text*, for which even a plausible case can be made out, in favour of the idea that the flesh of Christ differed *in any respect* from the flesh of all other men ; that, on the contrary, the absolute homogeneity of the two is everywhere assumed, and often expressly asserted, throughout the whole range of the apostolic writings. And I cannot pass from the point with anything more appropriate than by saying, in language borrowed from an eloquent writer, that the result just obtained as to the constitution of Christ's person "defies all reasonable contradiction, and will in the end be generally received."



## CHAPTER XII.

THE FLESH AND THE SPIRIT IN THE PERSON OF THE  
BELIEVER.

WHAT we have hitherto insisted upon has been the fact that Christ during His life on earth was possessed of a constitution identical in all essential respects with that possessed by each believer during the same period, both alike consisting of two natures oppositely characterised, the one Divine the other human, the one heavenly the other earthly, the one spiritual the other fleshly, the one essentially holy the other essentially sinful. But we require to proceed one step farther. For what we wished to make out was, not merely the identity of nature as between Christ and the believer while on earth, but rather the identity of experience. More exactly, the point to be established was, that the relation of the believer to sin, considered as an indwelling principle tending to lord it over the personality, and so to pass from the potential into the actual state, has its exact counterpart in the earthly experience of Christ. The question raised in the opening paragraph of Rom. vi. was as to the possibility of the believer's continuing in *actual* or *overt* sin, and the apostle based his answer to this question on the possibility of Christ's committing *actual* or *overt* sin. Ostensibly it is the experience of Christ *in heaven* that is brought into comparison with the experience of the believer on earth ; and this owing to the circumstance that the exigencies of the argument, which starts from the accomplished fact of baptism, lead the writer to contemplate the believer in his ideal state ; but in reality the parallel lies between the experience of the believer on earth and the experience of Christ *on earth*. The question before

us is therefore as to the possibility of Christ's—I do not say continuing in, but—committing *actual* or *overt* sin *during His earthly life*. And this question resolves itself into an inquiry into the nature, origin, and limits of Christ's *temptations*.

Now, the gist of the whole matter is already contained in the statement of the author of Hebrews that Christ was “tempted in all points like as we are (καθ’ ὁμοιότητα), without sinning” (iv. 15). The Greek word “try” (πειράω) is, indeed, somewhat more general than our English word “tempt.” In the present epistle, at any rate, it always includes a reference to the external sufferings incident to human life as such, and specially to the life of Christ and His earliest followers. Still it always at the same time covers and embraces the meaning of the English word “tempt.” It does so in the text just quoted in particular, as the contingency suggested by the concluding phrase “without sinning” is sufficient evidence. It may, therefore, be conveniently and correctly enough translated by “tempt,” when the special aspect of its meaning conveyed by that word is under discussion.

That the words “apart from sin” (χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας) will not bear the meaning that is usually put upon them was pointed out at a previous stage. The advocates of the sinlessness of Christ's human nature are perpetually quoting and appealing to these words, as if they amounted to an absolute demonstration in favour of that dogma, and as if they were palpably and irreconcilably at variance with any other view. It is, for them, a most unfortunate thing that the apostle should have said what he does say at ix. 28, for, had he not done so, their position, though utterly false, as this latter verse affords us the means of demonstrating, might, perhaps, have claimed to rise to the dignity of plausibility. As it is, no such claim can be advanced or entertained by any reasonable man. When the writer says that “Christ, having been once offered to bear away the sins of many, shall appear a second time *apart from sin* (χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας),” he clearly implies that when Christ appeared the first time, He was not “apart from sin,” but in connection with sin. There must, therefore, be a sense in which Christ, while on earth, was *not* “apart from sin,” as well

as a sense in which He *was* "apart from sin." What are these different senses? For answer, we must appeal to the contexts of the two passages where the expression occurs, and to parallel passages elsewhere. And, when such an appeal is made, it becomes evident at once, that Christ, while on earth, was *not* "apart from sin" in the sense in which it is affirmed that He was "apart from sin," and that He *was* "apart from sin" in no other sense than that in which each believer, while on earth, *may be*, or at least *is exhorted to be*, "apart from sin." The difference between Christ's first and His second coming is, that whereas at His first coming He came in a "body of sin" (Rom. vi. 6) for the purpose of putting away sin through His death, at His second coming He shall come in a "body of glory" (Phil. iii. 21) for the purpose of bringing ultimate salvation to them that wait for Him through His life. This is, beyond question, what is taught, after a somewhat figurative fashion, in the closing verse of Heb. ix., and in other similar passages too numerous to be even referred to. That Christ, during His life upon earth, was somehow *in* connection with sin, and that, by His death upon earth, He escaped *out of* that connection, is acknowledged on all hands. It is also acknowledged, that the relation between Christ and sin came into existence through incarnation, and that it ceased to exist through glorification or spiritualisation. The only question, therefore, is as to *how* Christ stood connected with sin. Now, we have offered what I hope have appeared irrefragable reasons for holding that the connection between Christ and sin was constituted through the presence of sin, as an inherent principle, in the flesh which He assumed, and that it was dissolved through the death and destruction of that flesh, together with the principle of sin inherent in it. This, then, is the sense in which Christ was *not* "apart from sin" during His life upon earth. But this is in no way inconsistent with the fact that Christ *was* "apart from sin" during the same period in the sense evidently intended in Heb. iv. 15, as the following passage from Peter may suffice to show. "Christ also suffered [=was tried and tempted through His trials in all points like as we are] on your behalf, leaving you an example that ye should follow His steps; *who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth; who*

*when He was reviled reviled not again, when He suffered threatened not, but delivered Himself over to Him that judgeth righteously* [=who was "apart from sin" as ye should strive to be]; *who His own self carried our sins in His body up to the tree* [=who was not "apart from sin" in the sense that His body of flesh was sinless while yours is not], in order that we, having died to sin, might live unto righteousness" (ii. 21-24).

The truth of the matter is, that the closing paragraph of Heb. iv., so far from lending any countenance to the idea that the flesh of Christ was sinless, furnishes a multiplicity of the most cogent reasons in support of the opposite opinion. In the first place, the mere fact that Christ was tempted at all proves of itself that He was not "apart from sin" in the sense usually held. For temptation is possible and conceivable only as a conflict between good and evil impulses. And the powers of evil with which man has to contend are usually comprehended, with special reference to John's first Epistle, under the three categories, the world, the flesh, and the devil. Such a division might certainly be objected to on the ground that the different categories are not exclusive of one another, and that they were not intended to be so by the apostle who used them. The flesh is a part of the world, and the lust of the flesh is at the same time the lust of the world. "All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the vainglory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world; but the world passeth away, and the lust thereof" (ii. 16, 17). The flesh is not only a part of the world, but being in immediate contact with the spirit, it is that part through which, directly or indirectly, *all* the world's temptations come. Again, the devil and his emissaries cannot be viewed as sources of temptation wholly distinct from the lusts of the flesh; for it is in and through the lusts of the flesh that the supersensuous powers of evil act on human nature. We have seen that the principalities and the powers of darkness are so closely associated with the lusts of the flesh by the Apostle Paul that he would almost seem to identify the two when he speaks of the putting off of the body of the flesh as being at the same time a putting off of those principalities and powers. The



flesh is, as it were, the battle-ground of the powers of evil, from which *all* their assaults emanate. It is not strange, therefore, that the last-named apostle should reduce all human temptation to a simple conflict between the flesh and the spirit. Whatever is good in human nature is ranged on the side of the spirit; whatever is evil on the side of the flesh; and whatever evil assails the good in human nature from without assails it through the evil within. Temptation exists because "the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, these being contrary the one to the other, so that ye may not do the things that ye would" (Gal. v. 17). There is no doubt that the works of the flesh, which the apostle proceeds to enumerate, are intended to comprehend, in a general way, all evil works whatever, just as the works of the spirit are intended to comprehend, in a general way, all good works whatever; therefore, the lusts of the flesh must include all evil tendencies whatever—that is, the conflict between flesh and spirit must embrace in itself every form of human temptation. It follows that human temptation cannot exist apart from fleshly lust, and that, wherever human temptation does exist, there must exist *sinful* flesh.

But, I shall be told, is it not metaphysically possible that temptation, even human temptation, may exist apart altogether from the lust of the flesh, though all *ordinary* human temptation exists only in that form? Doubtless my opponents will assert that it is. As soon as we enter the region of pure metaphysics, every man believes, or at any rate pretends to believe, whatever pleases his fancy, or flatters his pride, or serves his immediate interest, knowing that he is in little danger of being called to account. Were this question to be settled by the methods of metaphysics alone, I for one should utterly despair of ever bringing it to a decisive issue. But happily it is not so. Let us hear what the Apostle James has to say on the subject. "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God, for *God cannot be tempted with evil*, and He Himself tempteth no man; but each man is tempted *by being drawn away of his own lust and enticed*. Then lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin, and sin, when it is full grown, bringeth forth death. [Thus it is the flesh

alone that is the source of temptation, but God is the author, not of the flesh, but of the spirit, for] of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures" (i. 13-18). These verses, again, may be taken as a clear proof that Christ could be spoken of as "apart from sin," while yet His flesh was pervaded by the principle of sin, and that not only in a dead or dormant condition (Rom. vii. 8, 9), but even in the state of living activity which is called "lust," and which constitutes the source of all human temptation. Moreover, they state negatively, that God is "untempted of evil" (ἀπείραστος κακῶν), which is the same in effect as that God *cannot* be tempted of evil; while they state positively, that every man "is tempted" (πειράζεται), which is the same in effect as that every man *can be* tempted *only*, by being drawn away of his own lust and enticed; and unless clear evidence to the contrary is forthcoming, these two things when taken together, must be held to imply, (1) that Christ could not be tempted in His pre-incarnate state, (2) that He cannot be tempted in His present spiritualised or glorified state, (3) that He *was* tempted in His earthly incarnate state, *by being drawn away of the lust of the flesh and enticed*, and that He *could not* have been tempted in any other way. I know it will be objected to this argument that it cannot be valid, since it would prove too much. And that is why I have used the words, "unless clear evidence to the contrary is forthcoming." If God cannot be tempted of evil, and if human temptation can exist only in the form of fleshly lust, then Adam could not have been tempted *before he fell*, which, however, we know, or imagine we know, that he was. When the apostle says that God is not tempted of evil, and that man is tempted only by the lust of the flesh, this, it will be said, must be held to apply solely to man, *as he at present exists*, and therefore not to Adam before he fell, nor by consequence to Christ, always assuming that the human nature of Christ was identical with that of Adam while yet unfallen and not with that of man as he at present exists. The objection, however, is more specious than solid. It is a trick of long standing, that of thrusting all the difficulties of theology back into the period

before Adam fell, and solving them by means of assumptions as to what did, or would, or might have happened then. The same sort of expedient is much in favour with the more ardent champions of "the atonement," who, when they are baffled in the domain of New Testament exegesis proper, never fail to take refuge amid the obscurities of the ritual law of the Pentateuch, where, as they very well know, there is much greater scope for arbitrary assumptions and baseless assertions. It is certainly very convenient, when the prosaic statements of Christ and His apostles refuse to yield satisfactory results, to be able to fall back on such remarkably lucid, intelligible, and trustworthy narratives as the opening chapters of Genesis, and the priestly legislation of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. Unfortunately, many people now-a-days are perverse enough to entertain serious doubts as to whether there ever was an Adam, and doubts still more serious as to whether, assuming that there was, he ever existed in a state essentially different from that in which all men exist now. They tell us, that as we are blissfully ignorant as to when, how, and in what particular state the created world as a whole came into existence, so we are necessarily equally ignorant as to when, how, and in what particular state each of its constituent parts (the human race included) came into existence. Even if we were firmly persuaded upon New Testament grounds, that the human nature of Christ was identical with the nature of man, as originally created, we have, they allege, no reliable knowledge as to what that original nature was—at least we have no solid and substantial ground for thinking that it differed in any respect from the actual nature of man, as he at present exists. With such persons, therefore, an argument based on the state of things that existed before Adam fell, will hardly carry assured conviction. However, the above objection admits of a far more decisive answer than this.

For, in the second place, the closing paragraph of Heb. iv. affirms not only that Christ was tempted, but that He was "*tempted in all points like as we are.*" How is it possible that Christ could have been so tempted, unless His human nature, the source of all His temptations, that which alone rendered Him liable to temptation, had been in all points like

as ours is? It is not here affirmed that the word "likeness" (*ὁμοιότητα*) does not imply substantial identity; the phrase, "in all points," evidently excludes any supposition of the kind. Neither can the meaning be that Christ was tempted in all points like as Adam was before he fell; for this is absolutely opposed to the words used. Nor, again, can it be pretended that the temptations of Christ did not arise from His human nature, and especially did not arise from the fact that His human nature was subject to sin, suffering, and death; for the writer clearly implies that this was exactly how they did arise, particularly when he says that "we have not an high priest that cannot sympathise with our weaknesses, but one that hath been tempted [*scil.* by the same identical weaknesses] in all points like as we are." Least of all can it be alleged that the weaknesses of Christ were "sinless infirmities," that they had no manner of connection with sin, that they were such weaknesses only as Adam had before he fell; for, not to mention that we have no evidence whatever that Adam before he fell could have had any weaknesses, if the weaknesses of Christ had no connection with sin, then His sufferings and death, which were the direct effect of His weaknesses (2 Cor. xiii. 4), can have had no connection with sin; and in that case the death of Christ can have been in no sense a penal affliction on account of sin; which, however, we know that it was. Besides, the author expressly implies that the weaknesses of Christ were identical in nature with "our weaknesses," with which He is able to sympathise, and these are indisputably the effect of sin, as they are also the source of temptation to further sin. In proof of this last point we may refer to what the Apostle Paul says of the "unknown yet well-known" weakness in his flesh (*cf.* Gal. iv. 13, 14, &c.). "Wherefore, that I should not be exalted overmuch, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, *a messenger of Satan to buffet me*, that I should not be exalted overmuch. Concerning this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me; and He hath said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee, My power [= the power of My Spirit] is made perfect in weakness [of the flesh]. Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my weaknesses,



that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (2 Cor. xii. 7-9). The apostle, then, regarded the special weakness in his flesh as a direct source of temptation to sin, as a messenger sent by Satan to buffet him, whilst he looked upon that weakness as special only in degree, and by no means as different in kind from all the other weaknesses incident to his flesh. The apostle saw and felt in all his weaknesses and consequent trials (v. 10) direct sources of temptation to sin, in and through which the adversary made his assaults, and which could be resisted and overcome only by the grace or Spirit of Christ dwelling and working mightily in him. The apostle's flesh was sinful, and therefore weak, and therefore a constant means of temptation to sin. The Spirit of Christ was holy, and therefore powerful, and therefore a constant means of resisting and overcoming temptation to sin. The same is of course true of all human flesh. Hence, the essential weakness of the flesh is the one universal cause of human inability to fulfil the law (Rom. viii. 3), and the ground on which man may be properly spoken of as enslaved to the principle of sin (vi. 19). Hence, also, the one only means by which men can be "helped in time of need" to overcome the temptations arising out of the weaknesses of the flesh, is the Spirit of God, who is the effective operative embodiment of the grace of God (Heb. iv. 16), and the source of all holy impulses and powers. Now, if Christ, by becoming "a sharer of the same [flesh and blood]" with believers, underwent "in all points" the same temptations, arising out of the same weaknesses (ii. 14, 18), and is able, in consequence, to sympathise with believers in all their weaknesses and temptations (iv. 15), how preposterous is it to allege that the temptations of Christ did not arise from the lusting of His flesh against His Spirit, as those of believers confessedly do! The greatest of the recorded historical instances (Matt. iv. 1-10) certainly lends no support to such an assumption; for there the assaults of temptation came through (1) "the lust of the flesh" [= "He afterwards hungered" (v. 2)]; and (2) "the lust of the eyes" [= "showeth Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them" (v. 8)]; and (3) "the vainglory of life" [= "cast Thyself down" (v. 6)].

Whether "the devil," to whose agency the whole temptation is ascribed, had any existence independent of the lusts of Christ's fleshly nature, may be left undetermined. In any case, it is beyond all dispute, that Christ was "drawn away and enticed" *directly and immediately* through the cravings of His fleshly nature. The extremity of hunger is just a form of fleshly lust; and the lusts of the flesh crave, each for its own object, quite regardless of whether that object be forbidden or no. In this case the object *was* forbidden, in the only way in which reason declared that it could be obtained, and the existence of the craving, under these circumstances, constituted the very essence of the temptation. Let it be added, that the writer to the Hebrews elsewhere teaches almost expressly, that the weakness of Christ, like that of every one else, was weakness due directly to the sinfulness of His flesh, and supplying an index of that sinfulness (v. 2, 3 ; vii. 27, 28).

We may take it, therefore, as an established certainty, that the temptations of Christ were of exactly the same nature, and that they sprang from exactly the same source as the temptations of all other believers. And this is so far from implying that the flesh of Christ was sinless, that it implies just the reverse. What distinguished the case of Christ from that of other believers, such as Paul, was not the fact that His flesh was less weak, but rather the fact that His Spirit was more powerful, insomuch that He could be "tempted in all points like as we are *without sinning*." The grace or Spirit, and with it the power of God, rested upon Christ (Luke ii. 40 ; cf. i. 80) still more fully than they rested upon Paul (2 Cor. xii. 9) ; of the former to a still greater extent than of the latter it might have been said, "My grace is sufficient for Thee, for My power is made perfect in Thy weakness" (*id.*). Nevertheless, the believer is exhorted to "draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace" (Heb. iv. 16), and pray that he may be "strengthened with power by His [God's] Spirit in the inward man, that Christ may dwell in his heart by faith, and that he may be filled unto all the fulness of God" (Eph. iii. 16-19)—in which event he might, like Christ, be "tempted in all points like as we are *without sinning*" (Jas. iv. 6, 7 ;

1 Pet. v. 8-10). Is it not, therefore, as fully made out as might be that the temptations of Christ differed in no respect from those of the ordinary believer, that the possibility of sinning was open to both alike,—this being involved in the very idea of temptation,—that the means of resisting temptation was also the same, although, as a matter of fact, Christ uniformly resisted and overcame temptation, which all ordinary believers fail to do?

*How* the ordinary believer is tempted has been already in part stated, and is described more at length in the classical passage, Rom. vii. 14-25, upon which it now only remains to offer a single brief observation or two. “For we know that the law is spiritual [in that its requirement is met by the principle of righteousness *in the spirit*, and by that alone (viii. 3, 4)], but I am fleshly, sold [as a slave] under [the principle of] sin [in the flesh]. For that which I work out [=actually accomplish—*cf.* “Lust when it hath conceived beareth sin” (Jas. i. 15)] I know not [=do not actually accomplish *deliberately*]; for not what I will [=deliberately love] that do I practise [=actually accomplish], but what I hate [deliberately] that I do [actually]. But if what I do not will [deliberately], that I do [actually], I consent [=deliberately agree] with the law that it is good. So now it is no more I that work it out [=actually accomplish what is actually accomplished], but [the principle of] sin that dwelleth in me [that is, in my flesh]. For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing [=no principle of righteousness]; for to will [=deliberately love] is present with me [that is, with my spirit (*cf.* Gal. v. 17)], but to work out [=actually accomplish] that which is good is not [present with me, that is, with my spirit (*cf.* Gal. v. 17)]. For not the good which I will [deliberately by means of the spirit] I do [actually by means of the flesh], but the evil which I do not will [deliberately by means of the spirit] that I practise [=actually accomplish by means of the flesh]. But if what I do not will [deliberately], that I do [actually], it is no more I [that is, my spirit] that work it out [=actually accomplish what is actually accomplished], but [the principle of] sin that dwelleth in me [that is, in my flesh]. I find, then, the law [=the above described, and now again to be repeated,

*regular* conflict of impulses which introspection reveals], that to me, who am [deliberately] willing to do good, evil is present [and is actually done]. For I am pleased [=deliberately agree] with the law of God as regards my inward man [that is, my spirit (2 Cor. iv. 16), the spirit of my mind (Eph. iv. 23)]; but I see a different law [*scil.* the *principle* of sin] in [the flesh of] my members (or body), warring against the law [*scil.* the *principle* of righteousness] in [the spirit of] my mind, and bringing me into captivity under [=slavery to] the law of sin which is in my members (or body). Wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me out of this body of death [and bring me into captivity under, or slavery to, that spirit of life]? I thank God [who shall, and is doing it], through Jesus Christ our Lord. So, then [to put the whole matter in a nut-shell], I, myself, whilst as regards [the spirit of] my mind I am enslaved to the law of God, yet as regards the flesh [of my body I am enslaved] to the law of sin."

The meaning of these verses has been the subject of more difference of opinion than that of perhaps any other part of the epistle, if we except the section v. 12-21. The main point in debate as to whether the person of whom the apostle speaks is to be regarded as in a regenerate or unregenerate condition—whether he is a person who is still under the law with its curse, or a person who has been freed from the law, and is under grace. If we can answer this question in a way which shall be satisfactory to all reasonable men, we shall have earned the lasting gratitude of a wearied public, and of future generations, by putting an end to a controversy that has been in existence since the days of Augustine, and that does not appear, at the present moment, to be one whit nearer a final issue than when it first commenced. The solution which I am about to propose, if it has no other merit, will at least possess the merit of simplicity, so that the reader need have no fear of being troubled with any subtleties.

I assert, then, that the person spoken of in the verses just quoted, like the persons spoken of throughout the whole of chaps. vi. vii. and viii., is a person neither regenerate nor unregenerate, but partly regenerate and partly unregenerate—a person, that is to say, *in process of regeneration*. But this



reminds us that the word regeneration requires to be defined ; for in this, as in almost all other cases, the inappositeness and ambiguity of the terms employed, lie at the root of the whole controversy. "By a consent almost universal," according to Dr. Charles Hodge, "the word regeneration is now used to designate, not the whole work of sanctification, nor the first stages of that work comprehended in conversion, much less justification, or any mere external change of state, but the instantaneous change from spiritual death to spiritual life." It does not follow, however, that the usage is either Scriptural or scientific, or that we can adopt it without rendering the simple and accurate interpretation of the New Testament writings almost, if not altogether impossible. When Dr. Hodge, and those who concur with him, define regeneration as "the *instantaneous* change from spiritual death to spiritual life," undergone by the person regenerated, they take it for granted, that persons are usually changed from spiritual death to spiritual life *in an instant*, whereas, in point of fact, they are always so changed *in a lifelong process*, which reaches completion only at the death, or perhaps at the resurrection of the body. The product of the regenerative process is a "new man," but no man is renewed throughout his whole person in an instant, except in those rare cases when physical death supervenes in the instant that regeneration commences. There is no such thing as translation out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son in an instant—at least in ordinary cases. There is always, down to the last moment of life on earth, a part of the person of every believer—"the old man which waxeth corrupt after the lusts of deceit" (Eph. iv. 22)—in the kingdom of darkness, "dead in trespasses and sins" (ii. 1), and therefore certainly not "changed from spiritual death to spiritual life." You will say, This is a mere matter of terminology. True ; but matters of terminology are of great consequence, if controversies are to be put an end to. We are seeking to interpret the New Testament, where the word regeneration, or something equivalent to it, is of constant recurrence. If we choose to adopt the same terms with the New Testament writers in speaking of the same subjects, we must be careful to use them in the same senses, otherwise we

shall plunge ourselves into a labyrinth of confusion, from which extrication will be next to impossible. Now the New Testament writers use the word regeneration and its equivalents in the sense of *renewal*. "In the *regeneration* when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His glory" (Matt. xix. 28), means in the renewed world that shall come into complete existence after the final judgment, when He that sitteth on the throne shall have made all things *new* (Rev. xxi. 1-5). The "washing of *regeneration*," and the "*renewing* of the Holy Ghost" (Tit. iii. 5), do not refer to different processes, but to one and the same process; and no one will dare to say, that the believer is renewed in the whole man after the image of God in the instant He first believes. It is true that the New Testament writers often speak of the believer *as if* his regeneration were complete from the first moment of faith; but then they use the same form of speech in regard to sanctification, which is confessedly incomplete. When the believer's regeneration is spoken of as complete, this is because his personality is for the time being identified with the so-called "new man" within him, with respect to which the process is actually complete. That this, however, is a mere mode of representation, is evident from the fact that the believer's personality can, in the same way, be identified with the so-called "old man" without him, with respect to which his regeneration is still entirely in the future. Both these modes of representation are found in the passage cited above; the one when the apostle says, that "in *me* that is in *my flesh*, there dwelleth no good thing;" the other when he says, "*I* delight in the law of God as regards *my inward man*." But when theologians define regeneration, they define it with reference, neither to the old man, nor to the new, but to both combined, or to *the whole person* of the believer; and in this reference, the change is not instantaneous, but extends from the first moment of faith to the dissolution of the body, a period which corresponds to the period of gestation, or perhaps we should rather say of parturition, in the analogous case of natural birth (Rom. viii. 22, 23; Gal. iv. 19).

Exactly the same remarks that apply to regeneration apply with equal force to the believer's relation to the law and to

grace respectively. The popular notion is that the believer, during his earthly life, must be either under the law, that is, under the curse of the law, or else under grace, and free from the curse of the law. In point of fact, the believer is neither under the curse of the law exclusively, and not under grace at all, nor is he under grace exclusively, and not under the curse of the law at all, but he is partly under the curse of the law and partly under grace, that is, he is in process of being translated *from* under the curse of the law *to* under grace. As regards the "new man" with which his personality is frequently identified, the believer is under grace, and not under the curse of the law. As regards the "old man" with which his personality is also sometimes identified, the believer is under the curse of the law, and not under grace.

So much having been said by way of clearing the ground, I hold it to be perfectly manifest, that the conflict described in Rom. vii. 14-25 between the apostle's "flesh" or outward man and his "mind" or "inward man" is just the well-known conflict between the flesh and the spirit, the old man and the new, in the person of each believer—a conflict that commences in the first moment of faith, and that can come to an end only when the flesh has been "brought to nought," and the spirit is left to reign alone. The parallelism between our passage and the following passage of Galatians is so exact that it is impossible on any rational ground to doubt that they both refer to the same thing. "But I say, walk by the spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary the one to the other, that ye may not do [actually] the things that ye will [deliberately]. But if ye are led by the spirit, ye are not under the law" (v. 16-18). There is no question that here, at anyrate, the apostle is describing the experience of the believer, and that the conflict to which he refers continues more or less as long as the flesh continues to exist. That which lusts on the one side is the principle of sin inherent in the flesh, which tends to reign in the members (Rom. vi. 12), and so to reduce the whole man into slavery to itself. That which lusts on the other side is the principle of righteousness inherent in the spirit, which

likewise tends to reign in the members (v. 13), and so to reduce the whole man into slavery to itself. How then can it be believed that the apostle is describing anything else in the parallel passage of Romans? Even if we suppose that the conflict referred to in Romans vii. commences *before* faith in Christ, still it cannot be limited to the pre-Christian period of the believer's life, since the flesh indisputably continues to lust and war against the inward man *after* that period. But there are the gravest objections to holding that the conflict is not limited to the post-Christian period of the believer's life.

For one thing, the passage, so interpreted, would be without the trace of a parallel in any other part of the apostle's writings, whereas it is easy to produce parallels to the language used, if it be understood to describe the experience of believers in Christ, including that of the apostle himself. The following is especially interesting:—"Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize. Even so run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth in the games is temperate in all things. Now they do it to receive a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I not as one that beateth the air; but *I buffet my body and bring it into slavery* [to my spirit], lest by any means, after I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected" (1 Cor. ix. 24-27; cf. Phil. iii. 8-14; 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8, &c.). Again, not only is there no historical foundation for the idea of such a pitched battle between the apostle's "flesh" and his "inward man" (supposing him to have had an inward man distinct from his "flesh") before he exercised faith in Christ, but the apostle himself, in the immediate context, expressly denies the existence of any such thing. He says that "apart from the law sin is dead [= in a state of dormancy and inactivity]; and I was alive apart from the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died" (vv. 8, 9). It is quite impossible to assign any period for the coming of the commandment, except just the period when he was struck down on his way to Damascus, when Christ was revealed in him, and when the Spirit of God began to operate in his soul. The contrast between what the apostle "was once" and what he "does



now," in the passage before us, is evidently the very same as we find in Phil. iii., where, after recounting his many natural advantages, he goes on to say, "But what things were gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ; yea, verily, and I count all things to be loss," &c.; and in this latter passage it is admitted that the point of transition is that of the apostle's conversion. Unless we are to give rein to the purest fancy, we must be content to accept the indications of history, and the hints scattered throughout his own writings, as evidence that the apostle's experience was continuous and homogeneous up to that point, and that from that point onward it was completely changed. Now, both these things are absolutely opposed to the view that in our present text the apostle is speaking of the natural man. The first is, for if the apostle's pre-Christian experience was continuous and homogeneous up to the point of his conversion, then the principle of sin in the flesh must have been dead, dormant, or inactive up to that point, which implies that it cannot have been warring against the inward man. And the second is, for if the apostle's experience was completely changed from the point of his conversion onwards, he could not have experienced a conflict between his flesh and his inward man before his conversion that could be described in language than which nothing could more exactly describe the conflict between his flesh and his inward man that he experienced after his conversion.

Once more, the whole connection of thought, from the opening of chap. vi. to the close of chap. viii., appears to me to be directly at variance with the notion that in the verses before us the apostle is describing the experience of a natural man. For the points raised successively at chap. vi. 1, at chap. vi. 15, and at chap. vii. 7, all bear on the experience of a man who is in process of being saved by grace—the first on how he cannot continue in sin that the grace by which he is being saved may abound, the second on why he cannot commit sin when he is no longer under the law as a condemning power, but under grace as a saving power, and the third on how the law is not itself sinful, though it bears only a negative relation to the experience of a man who is being saved by grace. Chap. vii., in particular, is occupied throughout in discussing the relation and function

of the law towards the believer's natural humanity. I say the *believer's* natural humanity. For I take it to be quite certain, that Paul never so much as dreamt that the law was meant to discharge the peculiar function which he here assigns to it, till, on being assured of Christ's resurrection, he perceived that true righteousness was absolutely unattainable in the line along which he had hitherto been seeking to reach it—viz., through obedience to the letter of the law in his natural state ; and that it could be attained only, on the one hand, through the death and destruction of his natural humanity, on the other hand, through his resurrection in a new, Divine, Christ-derived humanity. I admit, indeed, that the apostle, in viewing his subject from the ideal rather than from the actual standpoint, so as to make his argument more trenchant and forcible, and in universalising his special experiences at and after his conversion, so as to construct on their basis a general philosophy of religion, sometimes represents the function of the law toward the believer's natural humanity as having been completely discharged at the moment when he became a believer. And this might possibly suggest to the incautious reader, that he is speaking of the function of the law toward natural humanity considered in and by itself. But to suppose any such thing would be a very serious mistake. The apostle has nothing whatever to do, throughout these middle chapters of the epistle, with the function of the law toward natural humanity in and by itself, but only with its function toward the natural humanity of the believer—the man who is being saved by the method of grace—the man whose experience runs parallel to that of the apostle himself after Christ appeared to him, and his knowledge of what true religion was commenced. In no other case could the apostle have referred to his own experience at all ; for, before his conversion, he had entertained quite a different view of the law (*i.e.*, of Judaism, as Judaism was in the apostolic age), from that which he here expresses—a view identical with that of his Pharisaic brethren and Judaising opponents. Natural humanity in and by itself must go to perdition if it so chooses, and the apostle cannot help it ; though he does not say as much in these chapters, he does not touch on the question as to its relation to the law or to anything

else. The question before him relates exclusively to the function of the law in the experience of a man who has become the subject of Divine redeeming grace, having emerged at the opening of chap. vi. in the form of an objection to the plan of salvation through grace and faith unfolded in the first five chapters of the epistle. The point raised at chap. vii. 7, not less than the points raised at chap. vi. 1, and vi. 15, is an objection which an opponent would be ready to urge against the apostle's plan of salvation through grace and faith, and the whole paragraph (7-25), which is quite continuous, is intended to bear directly on the proposed objection. When, therefore, it is said that the apostle, in vv. 14-25, is describing a conflict between the "flesh" and the "mind" of the merely natural man, in which the mind is necessarily the unsuccessful party, —for that is what is held,—we are compelled to ask in amazement, what in the world has that to do with the apostle's plan of salvation through grace and faith, or with the questions raised and discussed from chap. vi. onwards? The supposed conflict will presumably go on to all eternity in the experience of the impenitent without bringing them into any connection with the Christian plan of salvation; it can, therefore, have no bearing whatever on the matter with which the apostle is dealing. If that which the passage describes be the experience of a *merely* natural man, and not that of a man in process of renewal, then it is wholly out of place in the connection in which it stands, and ought rather to have come in somewhere about chap. ii. It has no perceptible connection with the context either preceding or following, for as soon as we enter chap. viii. we find ourselves moving in exactly the same circle of ideas that surrounded us in chap. vi. Indeed, it may be observed that what is contained in the two opening paragraphs of chap. viii. is nothing else than a resumption and restatement, in language but slightly varied, of the positions which were already laid down in the two opening paragraphs of chap. vi.; the parallelism extends even to the breaking up of the thought into paragraphs, which renders it all the more noteworthy and remarkable. In chap. vii. the apostle allows himself to fall into what is, to some extent, a digression, in order to discuss the bearing of his main thesis (the answer to the objection raised at vi. 1)

on the nature and purpose of the law and the believer's relation to it, a subject which cropped up at vi. 14. When he has removed any objections that might have been raised upon that score, he returns to his main thesis, reasserts and enforces it still further, and so gradually passes to bring to a point his whole discussion on the plan of salvation.

On the other hand, the objections usually taken to the view I have espoused are, to my mind, utterly insignificant, and almost unworthy of notice, when weighed against the overwhelming considerations in its favour. It is said, for example, that the transition from chap. vii. to chap. viii., is like passing from storm and tempest into sunshine and calm, and that the two sections cannot possibly refer to one and the same individual, in the same stage of spiritual development. But this objection is completely nullified by pointing out, what is obvious alike from the nature of the case, and from the context, that it is merely the *point of view* that is changed, and not the *state of the case*. In giving a complete account of the believer's experience, we may contemplate and represent him either as he ought to be, that is, in his *ideal* state, which the believer, while on earth, never reaches, though he may sometimes approach it more or less closely; or we may contemplate and represent him as he actually—at least as he *often* actually—is, that is, in his *actual* state, which, though it varies considerably in different individuals, and at different stages of spiritual, and even of natural development, may yet be depicted in its main outlines by the help of a typical example. Now, throughout almost the whole of these three chapters, the apostle is constantly passing from the actual to the ideal, and again from the ideal back to the actual standpoint. Even in the opening paragraph of chap. vi., where the exigencies of his argument require him to keep as much as possible to the ideal, he cannot refrain from slipping into the actual, and so betraying to the reader that his leading point of view is an ideal, and not an actual one. He speaks of the believer's completed resurrection to life as still in the future (v. 5). He uses language which, though plainly implying that the new resurrection-life and the reign of righteousness have already begun (vv. 2, 4), is yet of a hypothetical character (*iva*



v. 4, πιστεύομεν ὅτι, v. 8), implying that the sway of righteousness and of life through righteousness has not yet become absolute. Especially should the form of v. 11 be noted, as conveying the idea that the believer is dead and alive again only in principle, not to the full or absolute extent. He is exhorted to *reckon* himself dead and alive again, that is, to identify himself with the new man, as regards which the two processes or the two sides of the one process have been already completed. And when we pass to the following paragraph, and to chap. vii., it becomes as clear as anything can be, that the double process of dying to sin and rising again to righteousness is only in progress, not completed, and that the reign of righteousness, limited and counteracted by the opposing reign of sin, is only incipient and partial, not final, absolute, or universal. Sometimes the transition from the ideal to the actual standpoint occurs in the middle of a verse:—e.g., “For as ye presented your members as slaves to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity, even so now present (not *ye present* as it would be if the ideal standpoint occupied in the protasis, and in the verses preceding, were still maintained) your members as slaves to righteousness unto holiness” (vi. 19). Now it is obviously just one of those rapid transitions from the actual to the ideal that we have at the opening of chap. viii. This, which is abundantly clear of itself, is rendered superabundantly so, by the fact that the apostle again returns to the actual standpoint in v. 12, where he says merely that the believer *ought not* any longer to live according to the flesh, and not as in v. 4, that he *does not* any longer live according to the flesh. Just so he had said at vi. 12, “*Let not* sin reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey the lusts thereof,” instead of saying as at v. 2, “we who died to sin, *how shall we* live any longer therein?”

But, again, it is objected that if the latter half of chap. vii. be regarded as furnishing a picture, not of the unbeliever's, but of the believer's experience, then it is greatly overdrawn; the true believer never or almost never experiences any such violent conflict between opposing impulses as is here so vividly set forth. To this it might be sufficient to reply, that if there be doubt as to whether the believer is ever conscious of a warfare so hot between his flesh and his inner man, there is

much more doubt as to whether the unbeliever ever is so. Unless I am greatly mistaken, it will be difficult enough for any one to find even the semblance of Scripture authority for attributing a sustained struggle of the kind described to the merely natural man. I know of nothing beyond the very guarded and hypothetical language of Rom. ii. 14, 15, that has so much as the appearance of pointing in the direction of such a thing. And it must be remembered that conviction of sin was far less likely to take place in the apostolic age than now, for then the moral law was completely overshadowed by the ceremonial, no distinction having yet been taken between the two. What evidence is there to show that any other non-Christian Pharisee ever had such an experience? In fact, this whole view of the passage appears to originate through carrying modern experiences and ideas back into the apostolic age. On the other hand, the apostle undoubtedly uses language with reference to the inner conflict of the believer quite as strong as that of our text in, *e.g.*, Gal. v. 17; 1 Cor. ix. 27, &c., and if the language be too strong in the one passage, it must be too strong in the others as well. However, there is no need to suppose that the believer is perpetually in the throes of the struggle described in Rom. vii. 14-25. The apostle never meant that what he says should be understood in so sweeping a sense. Temptation is a thing that comes intermittently, not a thing that abides constantly. It was so in the experience of Christ as we know (Luke iv. 13), and it is so in the experience of every believer. And that the apostle never meant to assert anything else, is plain from the fact that he passes over in chap. viii. to describe the ideal state of victory and triumph, which is also experienced by the believer in his measure, more particularly in periods of high spiritual strength and enjoyment, and of exemption from strong temptation. It is not even necessary to assume that the state of inner conflict with the principle of sin is the believer's *normal* state while on earth, or that it is anything more than an occasional thing, and confined chiefly to the earlier stages of Christian experience, though this last idea is, to say the least, not supported by anything in the writings of Paul. (See on the contrary, 2 Tim. iv. 7; Phil. iii. 12-14, &c.)

When, however, some writers, principally old men, go on to say that the believer never, or almost never, experiences such an inner conflict, this only shows—what is confirmed by everyday observation—how impossible it is for people who have been married for any length of time to throw themselves back, even in imagination, into the position which they occupied previous to that happy event, and realise the feelings that then “stirred this mortal frame,” and the temptations with which they had then to contend; how surpassing difficult, nay, how impossible it is for people of a cold and phlegmatic temperament to have any idea of the surging waves of passion that swayed betimes the spirit of a man so profoundly susceptible as the Apostle Paul.

There is another objection which is perhaps more frequently and more persistently urged than either of those I have just noticed, but which I must regard as particularly weak and frivolous. It is that whereas the inward man of the believer is usually elsewhere spoken of as his *spirit* (*πνεῦμα*), the inward man of the person referred to in these verses is twice spoken of as his *mind* (*νοῦς*), which word, it is thought, might be used to designate the inward man of an unbelieving, but not that of a believing man. But, in the first place, though it be true that the natural man *has* a “mind,” it is not true that the spiritual man has *not* a “mind,” nor in consequence can it be inferred that the word “mind,” might not be used just as readily to describe the inward man of a believer, as to describe that of an unbeliever. In fact, it is easy to produce passages where this word, or one derived from, and as nearly as possible identical with it, *is* used to describe the believer’s inward man in contradistinction to his flesh. For example, in a remarkable passage of 1 Cor., where the apostle is expressly contrasting the natural with the spiritual man in respect to the mental part of their constitutions, he says first, “But we received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us by God,” and then adds, a little further on, evidently as an alternative, “But we have the *mind* (*νοῦν*) of Christ” (ii. 12, 16). Again, in 1 Pet. iv. 1, 2, it is said, “Forasmuch, then, as Christ suffered in the *flesh*, arm ye yourselves

also with the same *mind* (ἐννοίαν); for he that hath suffered in the flesh, hath ceased from sin; that ye no longer should live the rest of your time in the flesh to the lusts of natural humanity [which are armed for war against the *mind* of Christ in you (Eph. vi. 11, *seq.*; Rom. vii. 23)], but to the will of God [=to the lusts of renewed humanity, which are armed for war against the lusts of the flesh (Eph. vi. 11, *seq.*; Gal. v. 17)].” I could produce more passages to the same effect, but any reader will find them in the concordance, and these are quite sufficient for my purpose, which is to show that the Apostle Paul might readily enough have used the word “mind,” with reference to the spirit in contradistinction to the flesh of a believing man. Further, the word “mind” is not the only word which the apostle uses in the passage before us to designate that part of the person which is opposed to the flesh. To denote the outward man, the apostle uses, besides the “flesh,” the “body,” and the “members,” and these are just the terms which we find in chap. vi., where the antithesis is indisputably between the flesh and the spirit, in the person of the believer. Does not this of itself create a strong probability, that the antithesis in chap. vii. is identical with that in chap. vi.? But the probability thus created rises almost to certainty, when we observe that in chap. vii. itself, the “mind” is alternated with the “inward man” (ὁ ἑσω ἄνθρωπος). For there is no evidence elsewhere in the New Testament that the apostle could have applied such a designation to any part of the person of an unbeliever, much less that he could have contrasted this part of an unbeliever’s person with another opposite part which might be called the flesh. I hope to show presently, from the *meaning* of that and similar expressions, that he could not have so applied it. What I wish to insist upon now is, that no one has yet produced any evidence that he could or did. On the other hand, we have the most explicit evidence that this expression could be applied, as it elsewhere actually is applied by the apostle, to that part of the person of a believer which is the antithesis of the flesh. “Wherefore we faint not; but though our outward man is perishing, yet our *inward man* is renewed day by day” (2 Cor. iv. 16). “For this cause I bow my knees



unto the Father, from whom the whole family in heaven and on earth is named, that He would grant you according to the riches of His glory, that ye may be strengthened with power by His Spirit as to the *inward man*, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith," &c. (Eph. iii. 14-17). Texts like these would almost suffice, apart from other considerations, to convince one that the "mind" or the "inward man" in contrast to the "flesh" refers, not to a part of the person of the unbeliever, but to the renewed part of the person of the believer.

Still, we are challenged to say why the apostle used the word "mind" at all, and not rather the word "spirit," to which he recurs in chap. viii. Is it so clear, however, that we are bound to assign any reason beyond the fact that the apostle chose so to express himself? The same question might be put with reference, for example, to "mind" in 1 Pet. iv. 1, as against "spirit" in v. 6 following, where, however, no one thinks of asserting that the word "mind" is not a suitable word for expressing the writer's meaning, nor of inquiring why he used that particular word and not the other. Those who press questions so finely drawn in regard to the two occurrences of "mind" in the close of Rom. vii. really need to be reminded that it was the apostle who wrote the letter, not either I or they, and that he had a right to vary his phraseology within certain limits as he saw fit, and to use any suitable word that came to hand. However, I think I shall be able to adduce a reason for the apostle's repeated use of the word "mind" in preference to "spirit" throughout the latter half of Rom. vii. that will give satisfaction to all readers of ordinary candour. We have seen that the difference between chap. vii. and chap. viii. is that whereas in the former the inward man of the believer is represented as in a state of violent conflict with the principle of sin in the flesh—so violent that he is often worsted and overborne, so far as action is concerned; in the latter the inward man of the believer is represented as in the ideal state of victory and triumph, when, for the time at least, the members are presented as the willing instruments of righteousness. Now, at the opening of our passage, the apostle says, "I am fleshly, sold as a slave under

sin ; for that which I work out *I know not*”—words which might be paraphrased by saying, “What I actually do is done in obedience to the blind impulses of fleshly passion, which uses me as its slave, not in obedience to the rational impulses which calm reflection, were that possible, would suggest.” That is to say, the reflective faculty, in so far as it is allowed to operate, is thought of as operating *mainly* on the side of the spirit ; the ideas which it brings into consciousness create impulses that for the most part make for righteousness ; whereas the flesh is thought of as impelling the individual to action almost instinctively, or, at anyrate, with a comparatively small amount of aid from the reflective faculty. It is with the free operation of the reflective faculty when the spirit contends with the flesh, as it was with the holding up of Moses’ hands when Israel fought with Amalek ; when calm reflection predominates, the principle of righteousness in the spirit prevails ; when calm reflection is rendered impossible by the pressure of the blind, instinctive, automatic, animal impulses of unrenewed nature, the principle of sin in the flesh prevails. The same idea runs through the whole of the verses that follow. And there is no doubt that it is perfectly true to experience. When the natural faculties are in their highest state of vitality, the spontaneous energy incident to them becomes of itself a source of strong temptation, which all the opposite impulses that the exercise of reason can call into existence are often inadequate wholly to suppress or overcome. Who has not felt, in the face of strong temptations, that the hope of victory lay almost entirely in the motives or determining influences that *reflection* could bring to bear on the course of action ? It is the faculty of reflection that alone distinguishes man from the brutes in such matters. Did he not possess it he would be quite as much the creature of blind, irrational impulses as they. His actions would, in fact, be determined in precisely the same manner as theirs. Now, it is just this faculty of reflection that is expressed by the Greek word *νοῦς*, and translated somewhat vaguely, though not inaptly, by the English “mind.” What could be more natural, therefore, than that the apostle, in discussing the origin, the limits, and the issues of temptation, should designate the sum of the

rational impulses as opposed to the blind impulses of the sin in the flesh by the name of the faculty to whose operation they owe their immediate existence? Yet it is only when there is a well-marked conflict of impulses that the reflective faculty is called into special requisition, or that it becomes conscious of itself as a source of impulses on one side or the other. When the ideal state has been reached, when good is so completely triumphant that it has driven its antagonist off the field, and the principle of righteousness that before was checked or even defeated by the principle of sin is now permitted to reign alone and unopposed, then the spiritual man obeys the law at the irreflective impulse of his spirit, just as the fleshly man disobeys the law at the irreflective impulse of his flesh. In other words, the better a man's character becomes, the more spontaneous and unconscious does his obedience to the law become. This, again, is an indisputable fact of experience. And as the former point explained how the apostle used the word "mind" in preference to "spirit" in the closing paragraph of chap. vii., so the present point explains how he uses the word "spirit" in preference to "mind" in the opening paragraph of chap. viii. The change in the term employed corresponds to the transition from the actual to the ideal, from the state of conflict and defeat consequent on the predominating power of the flesh to the state of victory and triumph consequent on the predominating power of the spirit.

These remarks would be amply sufficient to justify the interpretation we have put on the passage under consideration, but there are still one or two things that require to be said before everything is made perfectly clear. For one, we must define somewhat more exactly the relation of the "mind" (*νοῦς*) to the "flesh" (*σὰρξ*) and the "spirit" (*πνεῦμα*) respectively, and this again will lead us to state explicitly and to justify the meanings we have hitherto put upon these latter terms as they are used more especially by the Apostle Paul. Let not the reader suppose that I have the remotest intention of plunging him and myself into the mazes of what is known as "Biblical Psychology." The notion that the New Testament writers were gifted with an "inspired" system of psychology, or, in other words, that they either do present, or ever meant

to present, an original reflective analysis of the human mind, is a little out of date, and need not come into our consideration here. We may take it for granted that as the Bible writers used the ordinary popular psychological terms current in their day, so they used them *in the ordinary popular senses*. Both the terms used and the senses attributed to them differed at different periods of history, so that we have in the Bible not one psychological system but several. It is of no consequence, however, to ascertain precisely what these popular psychological systems are, as they have very little bearing on the Gospel of the grace of God, which the Bible writers were specially commissioned to teach. The only distinction of prime importance for understanding the plan of salvation embodied in the New Testament writings is the distinction between "the flesh" and "the spirit," the old man and the new, and that distinction, as will be proved immediately, is not, properly speaking, a psychological, but rather a *physico-moral* distinction. There is, however, one properly psychological term—"the mind" (*voûs*)—whose relation to "the flesh" on the one hand and "the spirit" on the other will have to be here distinctly defined, and for this purpose it will be necessary to state in a single paragraph the most fundamental distinctions of modern analytic psychology.

The best modern analysis—at least, what I consider the best—divides the mental phenomena into two classes, *thoughts* and *feelings*. Of these, the latter are the more fundamental, and, as some would say, the more original. Feelings furnish the materials or substrata of thoughts; thoughts are the cognitions or consciousnesses of the relations that subsist between feelings. An old, deeply-rooted, but not I hope ineradicable idea is that there exists a faculty of the human mind which may be called *the will*. There is no such faculty. There is a faculty of thought in the human mind which is called *intellect*. There is a capacity of feeling in the human mind which may be called *sensitivity*. There is no faculty or capacity in the human mind distinct from these; all mental phenomena are the product of one or other of the two. In particular, *willingnesses*, like desires, are simply states of feeling that precede and tend to give rise to specific actions,



to which they are always relative. There is no special capacity of willing, any more than there is a special capacity of desiring, distinct from the general capacity of feeling. Action (strictly so-called) is not a phenomenon of mind but of body. Between action and the feeling or plexus of feelings—the *subjective motives*, or *desires*, or *wishes* (volitions), or *wills* (θελήματα), or *pleasures* (voluntates)—that precede it there is nothing, absolutely nothing. Thought may watch over the conflict of impulses. Observation and reflection may alter the balance, by bringing new ideas, and with them new feelings, desires, wishes, wills, pleasures, or impulses, into consciousness. But THE WILL—there is no such thing.

This being premised, the Greek word νοῦς corresponds very exactly to the *intellect*, the faculty of thought or intelligence (1 Cor. xiv. *passim*). Now thought *in itself*—that is, the *act* of thought as distinguished from the *objects* of thought—is morally colourless. A thought may be either correct or erroneous, true or false; it cannot be either right or wrong, good or bad; it has and can have no moral quality whatever. When we speak of pure thoughts and impure thoughts, holy thoughts and unholy thoughts, we mean, not that the acts of the intellectual faculty are characterised by such or such moral qualities, but that the objects which the intellectual faculty compares together so as to identify or discriminate them from one another are objects which it is proper or improper, right or wrong, to think of. A man may have an indifferent or bad intelligence: he is not on that account a wicked or immoral man. In fact, many upright and pious men are unspeakably stupid, and every one knows that it is beyond the bounds of possibility to make them anything else. Even when men in their natural state are taxed with the darkness of their understandings, with their blindness, ignorance, and hardness of heart, as with something morally culpable, the meaning is not that their *intellectual* faculty is at fault, but that their faculty of *moral perception* or *feeling* is disorganised, corrupted, polluted, destroyed. This comes out clearly in the following passage of Ephesians, which is otherwise peculiarly instructive for our present purpose: “This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye no longer walk as the Gentiles

also walk *in the vanity of their mind* (ἐν ματαιότητι τοῦ νοῦς, cf. “became vain in their thoughts, and their senseless heart was darkened,” Rom. i. 21), being darkened in their understanding, estranged from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, *because of the hardening of their heart,—who being past feeling* [moral] *pain gave themselves up to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness* [cf. “Wherefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts unto uncleanness . . . and even as they did not approve to have God in their knowledge, God gave them up unto a reprobate *mind* (νοῦν) to do those things which are improper, being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greediness, maliciousness,” &c. (Rom. i. 24, 28, 29)]; but ye did not so learn Christ, if so be that ye heard Him, and were taught in Him, even as [moral] truth is in Jesus, that ye put away concerning your former manner of life the old man, which waxeth corrupt after the lusts of deceit, and that ye be renewed *in the spirit of your mind* (τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ νοῦς), and put on the new man, which after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of [moral] truth” (iv. 17-24). It appears from these verses, that what has to be got rid of in the process of renewal, is not the thinking faculty, nor any of its laws, but the lusts or immoral feelings characteristic of the flesh, together with the actions to which these immoral feelings tend to give rise; and that what has to be substituted is not a new thinking faculty with different laws, but the lusts or moral feelings characteristic of the spirit, together with the actions to which these moral feelings tend to give rise. The lusts of the flesh, and the actions to which they are relative (when the latter have been received into the mind in the form of sensations) are the *objects* of (vain, deceitful, or improper) thought to the unrenewed man—not the *acts* of his thinking faculty; and in like manner the lusts of the spirit, and the actions to which they are relative (when the latter have been received into the mind in the form of sensations) are the *objects* of (morally truthful, or proper) thought to the renewed man—not the *acts* of his thinking faculty. The thinking faculty is exactly the same in the renewed that it is in the unrenewed man—only, the practical objects with which it is

occupied are different. When the "mind" is said to be renewed (Rom. xii. 2), it is not really the thinking faculty that is reorganised, so that the renewed man thinks upon different laws from the unrenewed man, but rather it is the *capacity of moral feeling*, and therewith of willing or desiring, —which resides in "*the spirit* of the mind,"—that is reconstituted, so that what was not previously felt to be right and wrong is now felt to be right and wrong, and what was not previously done and avoided as right and wrong is now done and avoided as right and wrong. This, however, will require a little explanation.

When the apostle says, in the passage just quoted, that the Gentiles are *darkened in their understanding* and estranged from the life of God *because of the ignorance* that is in them, it is clear from the whole context that the ignorance to which he refers is ignorance of *moral* truth—of what is righteous and what is unrighteous. And this ignorance is traced to the hardening of their heart, to their being destitute of moral feeling—that is, of the capacity for pleasure in well-doing and pain in ill-doing—which is explained by the fact that "*the spirit* of their mind" is unrenewed.

By "the spirit" of the mind is evidently meant the natural human spirit, which forms, together with the flesh proper and the mind, the sum total of unrenewed humanity. That there is a natural human spirit destined to survive the death of the body is implied everywhere throughout the New Testament, and more especially in such passages as the following :—"For who among men knoweth the things of a man save *the spirit of the man* which is in him? Even so the things of God none knoweth save the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. ii. 11). "For I verily, being absent in body but present in spirit, have already, as though I were present, judged him that hath so wrought this thing, in the name of our Lord Jesus, ye being gathered together and *my spirit*, with the power of the Lord Jesus, to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh that *the spirit* may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (v. 3-5). "She that is unmarried is careful for the things of the Lord that she may be holy both in body and *in spirit*" (vii. 34). "Having, therefore, these promises, let us cleanse

ourselves from all defilement of the flesh and *spirit*, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. vii. 1). "As the body apart from *the spirit* is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead" (Jas. ii. 26). The Spirit itself beareth witness with *our spirit* that we are children of God" (Rom. viii. 16).<sup>\*</sup> In these passages, and in others like them, the antithesis lies between what I have called the flesh proper or the body, and the natural spirit of man, as between two different physical substances of the same ethical quality. This, be it observed, is something quite distinct from the more familiar antithesis between the flesh and the spirit as between two oppositely characterised ethical subjects. Several of the texts quoted clearly imply that the spirit as well as the flesh may be and is defiled by sin, and this proves conclusively that there is here no question of an antithesis between flesh and spirit as regards moral quality. The physical application of the two terms is, therefore, quite distinct from the ethical, though the two applications are, of course, very closely connected, the one being merely an extension of the other. That the physical application is the original, and the ethical the derived, may be taken as self-evident, since it is highly absurd to suppose that the former, in which "flesh" is alternated with "body," could have been derived from the latter. But of this more immediately.

Both the flesh and the spirit (the words are now used in their *physical* senses) are under sin, but they are not under

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\* It is unnecessary to waste time in discussing the idea that there is a *soul* (*ψυχή*) in human nature distinct from the body and spirit. That the New Testament writers had no intention of teaching any such thing appears most plainly from the fact that the spirit (or soul) alone is that which is ever said to survive death, while the body alone is that which is ever said to be brought to nought in death. In 1 Cor. xv. 45, *seq.*, the word *soul* is employed for no other reason than because it occurs in the Old Testament quotation which lies at the basis of the author's reasoning; the meaning put upon it is evidently identical with that conveyed by the word *flesh*, when the latter word is used in its pregnant ethical sense (*cf.* Jude 19). Such an application of the words *soul* and *soulish* was already in the apostle's thoughts when he penned ii. 14, where the verses that follow (*e.g.*, iii. 1) prove incontestably that *soulish* (*ψυχικός*) is used as a synonym for *fleshly* (*σαρκικός*). In 1 Thess. v. 23 (*cf.* Heb. iv. 12) the language is popular, liturgical, and highly rhetorical, like that of Luke i. 46 (*comp.* our own "with all my heart and soul") and it is really quite extravagant to set at defiance all the rest of the New Testament, and build a physical system on an isolated text of such a character.



sin in exactly the same way, nor can they be freed from sin in exactly the same way. The flesh is all under sin. So far as appears it is all equally under sin. And it is so under sin that it cannot be freed from sin. The flesh, the body, the members can be sanctified only by being put off (Col. ii. 11), mortified or put to death (iii. 5), and so brought to nought (Rom. vi. 6). When believers are exhorted to "cleanse themselves from all defilement of the flesh and spirit" so as thereby to perfect holiness in the fear of God (2 Cor. vii. 1), the nature of the case forbids that the cleansing in both cases should take place in precisely the same way. A reference to the preceding context reveals the fact that the "defilement of the flesh," which the apostle has in view, is impurity in the technical sense of the word, or something of that nature (*cf.* also 1 Cor. vii. 34, cited above); and when we turn to Col. iii. 5, we find that sanctification from sins of impurity is to be attained, not by expelling the principle of sin from the flesh (if that were possible, bodily death would no longer be a necessity), but by *mortifying* or *putting to death* "your members which are upon the earth, fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire," &c. The same thing comes out still more clearly in the fuller discussion of the same subject which we have in 1 Cor. vi. 12-20, where the apostle, while admitting the lawfulness of using meats and marriage in proper circumstances, on the ground, as he says elsewhere, that "everything created by God is good and nothing to be rejected" (1 Tim. iv. 4), takes care at the same time to state explicitly that God will *bring to nought* the bodily organism, together with the meats and marriage appropriate to it,—all these things being part of the present evil world, the fashion of which passeth away (1 Cor. vii. 31). The body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, but only after it has been put to death, virtually if not completely, and raised again after Christ's example (vi. 14). The members are the members of Christ, but only through their mortification, destruction (v. 5), and consequent redemption from sin (vi. 20; Phil. iii. 21), especially from fornication (Col. iii. 5). Union to Christ takes place in the element of spirit alone (1 Cor. vi. 17), and, therefore, the members of the body before they can become the members of Christ must

pass through death and be spiritualised (v. 14 ; xv. 42-44). Whether the statements regarding the redemption of the natural body, and its transformation into a spiritual body are to be understood as implying anything more than the fact that the redeemed personality of the believer will be a personality complete in its kind, and not the surviving splinter or half of a personality once complete, is very hard to say.\* In any case

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\* The problem presented by the statements of the New Testament respecting the resurrection of *the body* is attended with difficulties of various kinds which I cannot profess to be able completely to clear up ; but as it has emerged oftener than once in the foregoing pages, and as the reader will probably expect that I should offer an opinion on it, I will here add a remark or two which must be taken into account by any one who would arrive at a definite conclusion thereon. The *locus classicus* on the subject will be admitted to be 1 Cor. xv. Now, in that passage, the apostle's reasoning is avowedly based upon two presuppositions, the one, the fact of Christ's resurrection from the dead (v. 12, &c.), the other, the idea of a typical relationship between Adam and Christ (v. 45, &c.). As to the latter -- when the apostle says, "If there is a natural body there is also a spiritual body" (v. 44), he appears to rest his belief that the glorified individual, who is conformed to the image of the Second Adam (v. 49), will have a body as well as a spirit entirely on the circumstance that the first Adam, whom he regards as a type of the Second, had a body as well as a spirit ; that is to say, his whole position is made to turn on the reality of the typical relationship between Adam and Christ, and on the exactness of the correspondence between the two. But we have already seen (chap. iv.) that the idea of a typical relationship between Adam and Christ is a popular Rabbinical idea from which nothing can be deduced that does not partake of its own extremely questionable character. As to the former--there can be little doubt that the appearances of Christ after His death had a very large share in determining the apostolic conception of a bodily resurrection (*cf.* Rom. viii. 11). But those appearances can hardly be thought of *by us* as other than purely miraculous or abnormal from the standpoint of the life after death. Whatever may have been the case with the apostles, *we* cannot conceive of the material particles of Christ's body having been transmuted into spirit at His resurrection, any more than we can conceive of the material particles of our own bodies, which may, for aught we know, be identical with those of other men's bodies, being transmuted into spirit at our resurrection. The disappearance of the material body of Christ from the grave, and its subsequent reappearance, seemingly with all its original properties (Luke xxiv. 39-43), must, therefore, be regarded as due not only to Divine intervention, but to altogether special and extraordinary Divine intervention. Thus it becomes somewhat of a precarious matter to allow the appearances of Christ after His death to rule our conception of the state of glorified saints in the life to come. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that Paul frequently identifies the believer's resurrection with the process of regeneration (Eph. ii. 5, 6 ; Col. iii. 1, *seq.*, &c.), which takes effect simply in the renewal of the spirit through the expulsion of the principle of sin, the body being at the same time brought to nought, and this might seem to point in the direction of a purely spiritual resurrection completed in the moment of physical death. The peculiar

we are certain that the body of flesh which now exists will be destroyed in death, and that the so-called body, which the believer receives in its stead, will be something *physically* different—that it will not be “flesh and blood” which “cannot inherit the kingdom of God,” but spirit akin in nature to the Divine (*cf.* 1 Pet. iv. 6 ; iii. 18). The death and consequent destruction of the body of flesh would be an absurdity and an anachronism if the substance of which it is composed were sanctified from sin before death. But the whole New Testament concurs with history and experience in testifying that such positive sanctification of the body is impossible. When the body is said to be sanctified, this can be understood only in a negative sense—viz., in the sense that the individual is sanctified through the mortification and consequent destruction of his body.

On the other hand—and this is the point more immediately before us—the spirit is not and cannot be said to be sanctified in such a manner. We never read of the spirit being mortified, crucified, or put to death, and so brought to nought. Such expressions would be wholly inappropriate and inapplicable to the case of the spirit. The spirit is defiled by sin, but it is not equally defiled in all men, nor is it all defiled in any believer ; perhaps we ought even to go the length of saying that it is not all defiled in some who are not believers, though this might not be materially different from saying that it is not equally defiled in all men (*cf.* Rom. ii. 14, 15). Anyhow, it is certain that men are not all equally depraved ; they are not all born equally depraved, nor anything like it ; nor do they continue equally depraved after they have become capable of conscious sin ; nor, again, do those who have once been deeply depraved necessarily remain for ever deeply depraved ; on the contrary, they may be recovered, and become

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passage, 2 Cor. v. 1, *seq.*, may not lend distinct support to the same view, but it cannot, to say the least, be easily harmonised with the idea of a strict bodily resurrection.

If the good reader is dissatisfied at leaving undetermined a point which he may possibly esteem as one of very considerable interest, not to say importance, let him draw comfort from the reflection that a very definite solution will be forthcoming *by-and-by*.

less and less depraved; all which things are possible, because the spirit may be pervaded by sin in different degrees. And this implies that the principle of sin is not essential to or inseparable from the spirit of man. Hence the sanctification of the spirit is not through the mortification and consequent dissolution of its substance—the substance of spirit, as far as we know, cannot be dissolved—but through renewal, which consists simply in the expulsion of the principle of sin. The spirit is the *image of God* in man, which may, to a greater or less extent, be defiled, deformed, degraded, darkened, rendered morally ignorant or insensible by being occupied to a greater or less extent with the principle of sin inseparable from the flesh; or again, it may be recovered from under the dominion of sin, and restored to ideal purity, knowledge, and glory. This is clearly what is involved in the apostle's words when he says, “that ye be *renewed in the spirit* of your mind, and put on the *new man, which after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of [moral] truth;*” or, as it is otherwise put in the parallel passage of Colossians, “and have put on the *new man, which is being renewed unto knowledge [of righteousness and holiness of truth] after the image of Him that created him*” (iv. 10). To be “renewed in the spirit of the mind *unto knowledge* after the image of God” cannot mean to have the *method of thought* altered from a human to a Divine method, but rather it means to have the *capacity of feeling* what is right and wrong altered so as to coincide with God's capacity of feeling what is right and wrong. The spirit of the mind perceives moral distinctions in the same way that the palate perceives distinctions of taste, in the same way that the eye perceives distinctions of colour. The spirit of the Divine mind, which is absolutely pure, is the supreme standard of taste in matters of morality. The nearer that the spirit of a human mind approaches to the Divine in purity, the more accurate does its perception of moral distinctions become; and, obversely, the more that the spirit of a human mind is disordered, corrupted, and polluted by sin, the more darkened and ignorant of moral distinctions does it become. Beyond all doubt this is the idea expressed in the extract from Ephesians quoted above, where the darkness of the Gentiles'



understandings with respect to right and wrong, their ignorance of, and consequent estrangement from, the life of God, the ideal moral life, is traced to the hardening of their hearts, to their want of *moral feeling*—a want which is explained by the circumstance that the spirit of their mind is unrenewed. And the same idea is expressed with equal clearness in other passages. Speaking with reference to Jews and Gentiles alike, the apostle says, “He is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh, but he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that *of the heart, in the spirit . . .* whose praise is not of men, but of God” (Rom. ii. 28, 29). “A reprobate mind” (i. 28) is the result of a spirit so utterly polluted and depraved as to be bereft of the most elementary moral sensibilities,—having no glow of satisfaction in what is good, and, so far from feeling pain, positively delighting in every form of evil, as practised both by itself and by others. The expression does not point to intellectual deficiency, or to properly mental perversion, but rather to moral or spiritual corruption, purity of spirit being the necessary condition of accurate moral perception (Matt. v. 8); witness the following unambiguous deliverance bearing directly on the very point:—“To the pure all things are pure, but to them that are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure, but both their mind [= the spirit of their mind] and their conscience [= their moral perception, which is a function of the spirit of their mind (Eph. iv. 23, 24)] are defiled. They profess that they know God [= perceive and approve—the two things always go together—the Supremely Good], but by their works they deny Him, being abominable and disobedient, *and unto every good work reprobate*” (Tit. i. 15, 16). To have “a reprobate mind” is the same as to be “corrupted in mind and bereft of the truth [as to what is right and wrong], supposing that godliness is a way of gain” (1 Tim. vi. 5)—to be “corrupted in mind, reprobate concerning the faith” (2 Tim. iii. 8)—or, as it is otherwise put, to be “seared in conscience as with a hot iron” (1 Tim. iv. 2). The last is a figurative turn of expression that can only refer to the cessation of all moral feeling, and therewith of all consciousness of the distinction between right and wrong; in other

words, of all knowledge of moral truth. No other explanation is in accordance with analogy, or, for that matter, yields a sense that is at all intelligible.

Some of these texts put us very directly in the way of ascertaining what is the proper Bible view of *conscience*. According to what may fairly claim to be the orthodox or received view—the view of which Butler is the recognised exponent, if not the original author—conscience is a purely intellectual faculty, that does not admit of pollution or defacement once it has been developed, but, like other purely intellectual faculties, has a character fixed and unchangeable, and is in itself morally indifferent, albeit it is held to operate directly as a motive to good action, on the principle of what is known as “freedom of will.” This explains how it comes to pass that conscience is popularly identified with the Greek word *νοûς*, or, more strictly, is regarded as a peculiar function of the *νοûς*, which is unquestionably a properly intellectual faculty. On the other hand, according to the Bible view, conscience may be defined as “the consciousness of a pleasurable feeling of approbation attending the commission or contemplation of good moral actions, and of a painful feeling of disapprobation attending the commission or contemplation of bad moral actions, *when the moral character is in a healthy state*,—the standard of goodness and badness in moral actions, of health and dishealth in moral character, being the Divine law, considered as expressing the feelings of approbation and disapprobation in the Divine moral consciousness, which rests on the unchangeable character of God.” Just so literary style, pictures, music, culinary dainties are good when they please people in a healthy mental and physical state, bad when they give pain to such people. The susceptibility to this feeling of what is morally right and wrong, resides in the spirit of man, and constitutes the image of God in him, which is deformed in proportion as this feeling is lost, conformed in proportion as this feeling is restored. It is quite clear from 2 Cor. vii. 1, that all human defilement is defilement either of the flesh or of the spirit, and that the man who is free from defilement of the flesh on the one hand, and of the spirit on the other, is perfectly holy or pure. It is equally clear from 1 Cor. xiv.

14-16, that the "mind" (*νοῦς*) of man is to be distinguished from his "spirit" (*πνεῦμα*),—that while the latter is a substance open to impressions, whether emanating from the divine or other spirits, the former is the faculty of intelligence, strictly so called, which reduces to *distinct*\* consciousness and order the impressions of the spirit, that would otherwise run wild like those of the madman (v. 23) or the lower animals. Obviously such a faculty must, from its very nature, be incapable of anything like defilement or purification, and therefore, when we find all defilement ascribed either to the flesh or to the spirit, this is only what we might have expected *a priori*. But if the "mind" be incapable of defilement, and if the spirit alone of the inner nature be capable of defilement, then we know that when the "mind" is sometimes spoken of as being corrupted (1 Tim. vi. 5; 2 Tim. iii. 8), defiled (Tit. i. 15), filled with deceit or vanity (Eph. iv. 17), reprobate (Rom. i. 28), and at other times as being renewed (Rom. xii. 2),—we know that this is only a loose popular way of putting the matter, that it is not strictly speaking "the mind" that is corrupted, &c., and that requires to be renewed, but "*the spirit of the mind*," or, in other words, "*the mind as occupied by the spirit*" (Eph. iv. 23). We know, also, that conscience can neither be identified with the "mind," nor regarded as a peculiar function of the "mind,"—the "mind" exercises the very same function in the *distinct* apprehension of moral truth, that it exercises in the *distinct* apprehension of all other kinds of truth. We know that conscience must be a function, not of the "mind," but of the "spirit," which is capable of being defiled and rendered morally insensible, and again of being purified and rendered morally sensitive. We know this because conscience is everywhere spoken of as a thing that may be polluted and made obdurate on the one hand, or purified and made tender on the other; conscience, in fact, is not merely susceptible of moral quality, but it lies at the very centre of the whole moral character, so that when it can be pronounced good or bad, pure or impure, the whole

\*Cf. the illustration, "Even things without life giving a voice, whether pipe or harp, if they give not a *distinction* in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped" (v. 7) ?

moral character can have the same epithets applied to it (Tit. i. 15). Thus the whole work of renewal is comprehended in having the heart sprinkled from an evil conscience (Heb. x. 22),—in having the conscience purified from dead works to serve the living God (ix. 14); to be made perfect as concerning the conscience, is to be made perfect entirely (ix. 9); evidently because the spirit, of which conscience is a function, is all that can be positively renewed. We read repeatedly of a pure conscience (1 Tim. iii. 9; 2 Tim. i. 3), which is the same thing as a pure heart (Matt. v. 8,) and on the other hand of the conscience being defiled (Tit. i. 15), and cauterised or seared (1 Tim. iv. 2). Again, it is said that “when Gentiles which have not the law, do by nature [=at the impulse of their natural spirit] the things of the law, these not having the law are a law unto themselves, being such as show that they have the work of the law written in their hearts [=their natural spirits (v. 29)], their conscience [a function of their spirits] bearing witness with them, and their thoughts [the products of spiritual perception, and the subject-matter of intellectual reflection (2 Cor. x. 4, 5)] one with another accusing or else excusing them” (Rom. ii. 14, 15)—the meaning of which is, that morally upright Gentiles, when they do wrong, are conscious of a painful feeling of self-disapprobation, and when they do right of a pleasurable feeling of self-approbation, the source of which feelings is their conscience, which is a function of their morally upright, circumcised spirits (vv. 27-29). It is implied, also, that as the feelings of approbation and disapprobation towards what is right and wrong respectively, spring from purity of spirit, so they become in turn motives to purity of action. Much in the same way the Apostle Paul speaks of his “conscience bearing witness with him in the Holy Ghost,” to the truth of a statement he makes (Rom. ix. 1),—he having had a pleasurable feeling of approbation, as the percept of his own natural spirit purified and strengthened through the presence of the Divine Spirit. So when he says elsewhere that “the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are children of God” (viii. 16), he means that believers are conscious of the feeling of love---which is the mark of Divine sonship (1 John iv. 7)—as



the percept of their natural spirit purified and strengthened by the presence of the Divine Spirit. To have a good conscience (Acts xxiii. 1 ; 1 Tim. i. 5, 19 ; Heb. xiii. 18 ; 1 Pet. iii. 16, 21), or a conscience void of offence (Acts xxiv. 16), is to have the moral feelings *unhurt* (ἀπρόσκοπον) by the thought of evil deeds or *pleased* with the thought of “a good manner of life” (1 Pet. iii. 16). To offend a weak conscience (Rom. xiv. *passim* ; 1 Cor. viii. *passim* ; x. 23-33) is to *wound* (1 Cor. viii. 12) or *grieve* (Rom. xiv. 15) a man whose moral feelings are inordinately sensitive through the want of full and accurate *intellectual* (ἐν τῷ ἰδίῳ νοῷ, *id.* v. 5) knowledge (1 Cor. viii. 1-7, 11 ; Rom. xiv. 5, 14). When, on the other hand, the spirit of the mind, the heart, the conscience, has been renewed and made pure, men are able to “see God” (Matt. v. 8), to know and “in knowing to approve (δοκιμάζειν) what is the good and well pleasing and perfect will of God” (Rom. xii. 2).

Let me add the expression of my humble but very decided opinion, that this Bible view of the nature of the human conscience, or of the manner in which man comes by his moral knowledge, is absolutely true to psychological reflection. Butler himself cannot help bearing unconscious testimony to its accuracy. He says,\* “Moral precepts are precepts the reason of which *we see*.” The last words, “we see,” do not refer to bodily but to spiritual sight, which is the exact counterpart of bodily sight, and as bodily sight is properly called a *sensation* (feeling of the body), so spiritual sight is properly called a *sentiment* (feeling of the spirit). When an individual becomes conscious that either the pleasurable sentiment of approbation, or the painful sentiment of disapprobation, attends the commission or contemplation of a moral action (I mean the action of a moral being—a being possessed of intellect and spirit), then the individual *knows* (—εἰδησις) through his intellect *with* (συν—) his spirit that the action in question is either good or bad. This is the sum of the whole matter as regards the moral sense. All attempts to account for man’s moral knowledge in any other way, such as by tracing it to a faculty properly and purely intellectual, rest simply on confusion of thought, and the use

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\* As quoted by Mr. Sidgwick, “*The Methods of Ethics*,” *Second Edition*, Preface.

of language having no definite intelligible meaning. The above view is the only one that is at once transparently intelligible, and completely in harmony with all the facts of experience. And it explains how there is so intimate a connection between what is naturally good or bad and what is morally good or bad—what is naturally pleasant or unpleasant and what is morally pleasant or unpleasant—how the same words *good* and *bad* are applied to both categories alike, and how attempts are so constantly and so persistently made—and with such perfect honesty, though, in my opinion, without success—to resolve the latter into the former;—things which are utterly inexplicable if the knowledge of moral truth be not *sentimental*, as the knowledge of natural truth is *sensational*. It explains, also, how love and duty, or natural pleasure and moral pleasure, are the two main-springs of human action, how the doctrine that action always follows the greatest apparent good is in no way inconsistent with a man's doing what he feels to be his duty in all cases, save when he falls before overpowering temptation—an exception which gradual improvement of character, through the help of Divine grace, will ultimately do away—how what is pleasant in action is always accompanied by willingness in idea, how on this account my *will* has come to be interchanged with my *pleasure*—that good thing (whether natural or moral) with respect to which, when I contemplate doing it, I am *pleased*—how there is so often a conflict between natural impulses or willingnesses which arise from the flesh, and moral impulses or willingnesses which arise from the spirit, how a man's character, natural and moral, would, if we knew it thoroughly, be so unerring a guide to his conduct under given circumstances, yet how the infinite subtlety and rapidity with which the operations of the intellectual faculty (especially memory) are carried on, and modify the state of feeling, render it next to impossible, in any given case, to predict *with certainty* the course of action, or, in other words, to say that the individual *must* act so and not otherwise, how, therefore, human beings are justly spoken of as in a peculiar sense *free*, since they *may* always act in a manner different from that which an onlooker, or even which they themselves a short time before, would have anticipated—the word *free* expressing here, as always, nothing more than

the fact that *we do not know* how the future will develop—describing, that is to say, not a *state of things* in which the future will not be determined by causes, but a *state of knowledge* in which we are ignorant of the causes that *may* at any moment spring into existence to determine it—and last, but not least, it explains how the words *will* and *shall* have come to express, at one time the idea of simple futurity, at another the mixed idea which we call resolution. The original meaning of *I will* was *I love* or *like* (to do an action = *I have the pleasurable feeling of love when I contemplate doing it*). The original meaning of *I shall* was *I owe* or *ought* (to do an action = *I have the pleasurable feeling of moral approbation when I contemplate doing it*). The existence of either, and, still more, of both, of these feelings is known *in general* to be a powerful determining cause of human action. Hence, when my neighbour becomes aware, through the word *will* or *shall*, that either the one feeling or the other, or the two combined, is present in my mind, he at once infers that the relative action is *about to take place*. The knowledge that the feelings exist is virtually the knowledge that the action is *about to take place*, since it is known in general that the feelings have a *tendency* to produce the action, or, in other words, that, *as a rule*, when the feelings are present, the action is done immediately afterwards, or at such time as it can conveniently or ought to be done. Thus, the words which originally expressed mental states, pass first to express the relation between these states and physical states, and then to express the same relation between different physical states of things that are incapable of mental states. Again, as to resolution, it is a bargain with one's self, which resembles a bargain with one's neighbour in the circumstance that it is deemed *immoral* to break it, if for no other reason because it has a direct tendency to demoralise the character. In fact, the idea of a bargain or compact lies nearer than any other to the root idea of *owe* or *ought*. When, therefore, a resolution has been taken, it has the effect of bringing the whole weight of the *moral character* to bear as a determining influence on the relative course, and against any other course, of action; and so the word, expressing the fact that a resolution has been taken, becomes at the same time a

token that the action resolved upon is *about* to take place. It may be added that there could be no more convincing demonstration than is supplied by these philological facts,\* of the utter baselessness of the assertion (argument it cannot be called, though it is all that those who make it have ever been able to produce in lieu of argument), so often and so confidently repeated, that the testimony of common sense is in favour of the fantastic notion that intelligent human action is not due to determinate causes, in the shape of feelings, motives, or impulses. If the testimony of common sense be obtainable pure and unbiassed anywhere, it must be obtainable from the common use of language; but this, instead of implying that human action does *not* follow human feeling in precisely the same way that other physical effects follow their causes, implies *just the reverse*.

But what of the favourite modern way of putting it that human beings possess the faculty of *self*-determination? The word *self*, *personality*, or *ego* (as Germans and Germanisers love to call it), appears to have a curious fascination for some minds: I only wish they would ask themselves what they mean by it. Human nature as at present constituted is made up of the flesh, the spirit, and the intellectual faculty, and the word *self* when properly used comprehends all of these. The nail of my little finger is a part of myself in the full and proper sense of the word. The flesh and the spirit are both *sensitive* to impressions from without, and the *intellect* becomes conscious of the relations subsisting between the sensations and sentiments produced. Now, sometimes the personality is identified with the intellectual faculty, the *conscious* ego; at other times with the spirit, the *moral* ego; and at other times with the flesh, the *physical* ego, which last is called by pre-eminence the "person." If, therefore, when it is said that human beings are *self*-determined in their actions, the meaning

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\* "I have the smallest possible confidence in the metaphysical reasonings either of modern professors or of mediæval scholastics. But I have immense confidence in the profound metaphysics of human speech. The unconscious recognitions of identity, of likeness, and of difference, in which that speech abounds, are among the surest of all guides to truth."—DUKE OF ARGYLL in *Nineteenth Century*, vol. xxi. p. 326.



be that a man's actions are *all* determined *directly* by his intellectual faculty, we must deny it point blank, for none of them are so; the intellectual faculty determines no action *directly*; it merely becomes conscious of the relations subsisting among sensations and sentiments; though in doing this it is capable of determining sentiments, and so of *indirectly* determining actions. If, on the other hand, the meaning be that a man's actions are *all* determined by his spirit, and particularly by the *moral* sentiments of which the spirit is the special source, we must again meet it with a denial, though not so sweeping a one; for, in point of fact, men's actions are determined only *in part* by their *moral* sentiments, and *in part* by their *natural* sensations and sentiments, the two classes often conflicting, and the former being by no means always victorious even in the best of men. If, once more, the meaning be that a man's actions are *all* determined by his flesh, that is, by the *natural* sensations and sentiments of which the flesh is the special source, we must meet this again with a contradiction; for men's actions are determined *in part* by their *moral* sentiments, and only *in part* by their *natural* sensations and sentiments. If, in the next place, the meaning be that a man's actions are *all* determined by his intellectual faculty *indirectly*, since the sensations and sentiments by which they are determined directly all pass through that faculty, we cannot grant it to the full extent; for some, nay, many human actions are performed *unconsciously*, at the bidding of blind impulses, special, occasional, or habitual. If, yet once more, the meaning be that a man's actions are *all* determined through his flesh, his spirit, and his intellectual faculty combined, or through his whole self *independent of impressions from without*, the allegation is absurd, and must be met with a flat contradiction; for *all* the sensations and sentiments that go to determine human actions—even those that appear to be due entirely to the ever-flickering movements of the intellectual faculty—may be traced back into connection with, and therefore into *dependence upon, impressions from without*; the flesh, the spirit, and the intellectual faculty *exist and operate only in connection with, and to that extent in consequence of, im-*

pressions from without. If, lastly, the meaning be that a man's actions are *all* determined by his combined sensitivity and intelligence in connection with impressions from without, we answer, yes; *except* in so far as he acts through *bodily* constraint, which is the purely external counterpart of *mental* (fleshly and spiritual) impression.

We are now in a position to deal with the question, What is the precise nature and limits of the two ethically opposite categories, *flesh* and *spirit*, which are met with especially though not exclusively in the writings of the Apostle Paul? Hitherto we have assumed, as sufficiently warranted and established by the texts quoted, that these terms are used, the one to describe man as he exists by nature, the other to describe man as he is renewed by grace. This was evident enough and exact enough to serve as a working hypothesis at a time when closer definition would have been impracticable; but as we desire to take nothing for granted which the adversary might fairly or plausibly dispute, we must now be a little more specific. And the first remark we have to make is that the "mind" forms no proper part of either "the flesh" or "the spirit" (the words are now used in their *ethical* senses). The proof of this lies in the fact that when "the flesh" has been entirely "put off" or "brought to nought," the "mind" remains precisely as it was, except that it is now occupied by "the spirit," instead of being, as before, occupied by "the flesh." Further, we may take it as conceded that the sphere of sin in human nature and the sphere of "the flesh" are co-extensive, and in like manner that the sphere of righteousness in human nature and the sphere of "the spirit" are co-extensive. When the individual is entirely in "the flesh," he is wholly under sin, and not at all under righteousness; when he is entirely in "the spirit," he is wholly under righteousness, and not at all under sin (Rom. viii. 1-11; Gal. v. 16-26). Now this might suggest that the distinction between "the flesh" and "the spirit" is simply a *moral* distinction and nothing more,—that "the flesh" means "human nature *as pervaded by sin*," while "the spirit" means "human nature *as pervaded by righteousness*," the "mind" in both cases being left out of account as not being susceptible of any moral

quality. But such a view, on the face of it, is extremely improbable, since it fails altogether to explain why the fact that human nature is pervaded by sin should be indicated by calling it *flesh*, and why the fact that human nature is pervaded by righteousness should be indicated by calling it *spirit*. There is, I apprehend, no more certain fact within the domain of Greek lexicography than that the application of the terms *flesh* and *spirit* to contrasted physical substances is original, fundamental, prior, and proper, with reference to their application to contrasted ethical subjects,—that the latter application is a late and altogether special one, confined almost to the New Testament, and more particularly to the writings of Paul. No account, therefore, of these terms is either likely to be correct, or can be accepted as satisfactory, that does not show the link of connection between this original application and the derived application, of which confessedly an essential part is to indicate contrasted moral qualities. Accordingly, the above view is found to break down as soon as we come to examine it. If the distinction between “the flesh” and “the spirit” were a moral distinction *and nothing more*, then to be in “the flesh” would mean to be under sin *and nothing more*, to be in “the spirit” would mean to be under righteousness *and nothing more*. The spiritual man would differ from the fleshly man in respect that he was righteous instead of sinful, *and in no other respect*. The putting off of “the flesh” would mean the expulsion of the principle of sin from human nature *and nothing else*. The putting on of “the spirit” would mean the infusion of the principle of righteousness into human nature *and nothing else*. In other words, the physical constitution of men in heaven would be absolutely identical with the physical constitution of men on earth; their moral character *and that alone* would be different. “The flesh,” in fact, would be just another name for the principle of sin, and “the spirit” another name for the principle of righteousness. But all these suppositions are notoriously contrary to fact. If any one thinks otherwise, let him read the two classical passages last referred to (Rom. viii. 1-11; Gal. v. 16-26) on the assumption that all or any of them is correct, and he will soon discover that they will land him in

absolute nonsense at every step. We must therefore dismiss the idea that the distinction between "the flesh" and "the spirit" is a *purely moral* distinction.

On the other hand, it is just as impossible to hold that the distinction between "the flesh" and "the spirit" is in the last resort simply a *physical* distinction and nothing more, that whatever is moral in it is essentially involved in the physical, and does not require separate expression,—that "the flesh" means "human nature *as earthy or material, and therefore sinful,*" while "the spirit" means "human nature *as heavenly or immaterial, and therefore righteous,*" leaving the "mind" again out of account, as being neither earthy nor heavenly, but something—we shall call it a function—which may belong to either, and be transferred from the one to the other, in the way that materialists hold it to be transferred from the ever-changing material particles of the brain. For this, so far as the natural man is concerned, would be materialism in as gross a sense as any one now-a-days would care to maintain that doctrine. It would imply that man by nature is of one substance, and one only—viz., organised matter, body, flesh and blood, and that the death of the body is the utter extinction of all but those who are "born from above" or "born of the Spirit." And these things are absolutely opposed to the whole tenor of the New Testament, which teaches that all men, whether regenerate or unregenerate, righteous or sinful, have spirits distinct in substance from, and destined to survive the dissolution of their bodies (1 Cor. ii. 11; v. 5; vii. 34; Jas. ii. 26; 1 Pet. iii. 19; iv. 5, 6; Matt. xxv. 32; Rom. ii. 14-16; 2 Cor. v. 10; vii. 1). We must agree to set the plainest declarations of the New Testament at defiance before we can hold that the sphere of sin in human nature is co-extensive with the sphere of *flesh* understood in the sense of material substance, and that the sphere of righteousness in human nature is co-extensive with the sphere of *spirit* understood in the sense of immaterial substance. And if we cannot hold this, then we must dismiss as untenable the idea that the distinction between "the flesh" and "the spirit" is a *purely physical* distinction.



On these and other grounds, we asserted above that the distinction between "the flesh" and "the spirit" was neither a purely moral nor a purely physical, much less a properly psychological distinction, but rather a *physico-moral* distinction. What this is intended to mean will be best expressed by the help of the following formulæ, which will, I believe, meet the requirements of the case ;—

"The flesh" = the body of man *as such* + the spirit of man *in so far as it partakes of the moral character of the body of man* ;

"The spirit" = the Spirit of God *as such* + the spirit of man *in so far as it partakes of the moral character of the Spirit of God* ;

—it being implied that the union between the proper spirit of the regenerate man and the Spirit of God resembles in its intimacy the union between the proper spirit of the unregenerate man and his body.

Not many remarks will be needed to establish the truth of these definitions. It will be readily granted by every one that "the flesh" is thought of as containing all human sin, or that the sphere of sin and the sphere of "the flesh" are co-extensive, so that when "the flesh" has been put off all human sin has been got rid of. Now we have seen that all human sin is defilement *either* of the flesh *or* of the spirit (the words flesh and spirit being understood in their physical senses), in other words, that sin extends *both* to the flesh *and* to the spirit of the natural man. This leads us to infer that the natural spirit of man is somehow included in "the flesh," and that the inference is correct is clear from 1 Cor. iii. 3—to mention but one passage. The apostle says, "Ye are yet *fleshly* (*σαρκικοί*) ; for whereas there is among you jealousy and strife, are ye not fleshly, and walk *after the manner of man* (*κατὰ ἄνθρωπον*). " The "man" of whom the apostle speaks is the natural man, who possesses a spirit indeed (ii. 11) as well as a body of flesh, but who, notwithstanding, "receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them because they are spiritually judged," who is therefore directly opposed to the spiritual

man, that "judgeth all things" (vv. 14, 15). The natural man and the fleshly man are thus evidently identical, and to walk "according to man," is the very same thing as to walk "according to the flesh" (Rom. viii. 4). It follows that "the flesh" must comprehend the whole of the unrenewed man *qua* unrenewed, that is, in so far as he is susceptible of moral quality. On the other hand, it will be just as readily granted that "the spirit" is thought of as containing all human righteousness, or that the sphere of righteousness in human nature and the sphere of "the spirit" are co-extensive, so that when "the spirit" has been put on, the whole person has been made righteous. Now there is no doubt that the process of renewal unto righteousness in the strict and proper sense takes effect especially, or rather exclusively, on the natural spirit of man. It is in the *spirit* of the mind that men are renewed after the image of God in righteousness and holiness of truth (Eph. iv. 23, 24). The circumcision by which men are made truly righteous, is circumcision of the heart in the *spirit* (Rom. ii. 29). Hence we conclude that the proper spirit of man must, *when renewed*, form part of "the spirit." To offer detailed proof that it does so, would be superfluous, for the fact is admitted on all hands. What we rather require to insist upon is that the proper spirit of man, when it has undergone renewal, is not the whole of what is contained in "the spirit," but that the ethical category likewise includes the Spirit of God, as united with the renewed spirit of man, much in the same way that the flesh is united with the unrenewed spirit of man. The relation between the two is expressed either by saying that the Spirit of God or of Christ is in the spirit of the believer, or by saying that the spirit of the believer is in the Spirit of God or of Christ. "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit" (1 Cor. vi. 17). "But we received . . . the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us by God . . . know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you" (ii. 12; iii. 16)? "For through Him we both have our access in one Spirit unto the Father . . . In whom [as chief corner stone] the whole building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the

Lord, in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God in the Spirit . . . Giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is [to Christ as head] one body [mystical], and one Spirit [within it], even as ye also are called in one hope of your calling" (Eph. ii. 18, 21, 22 ; iv. 3). Still more frequently we read that Christ is in the believer, or that the believer is in Christ, these being other ways of expressing exactly the same thing. The texts in which this is said are so numerous that it is impossible even to refer to a tenth part of them. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature" (2 Cor. v. 17). "Christ in you the hope of glory, whom we proclaim, admonishing every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ" (Col. i. 27, 28). "He that loveth his own wife loveth himself; for no man ever hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it even as Christ also the Church, because we are members of His body" (Eph. v. 28-30). "But ye are not in the flesh but in the spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. But if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin [essentially belonging to it], but the spirit [which has been renewed through union with Christ] is life because of righteousness . . . For ye received not the spirit of bondage again unto fear, but ye received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God" (Rom. viii. 9, 10, 15, 16). These last passages prove with a clearness that leaves nothing to be desired, that "the spirit" is made up of the Spirit of God or of Christ and the believer's own spirit,—the latter as renewed and made righteous in the process of being united to the former, which was and is essentially righteous. The believer is created in the image of God, and conformed to the image of Christ, by having his natural spirit renewed in being united to the eternal Spirit of God" (Rom. viii. 29 ; Col. iii. 10). And, just as to be and to walk "according to the flesh" (Rom. viii. 5) is identical with to be and to walk "according to man" (1 Cor. iii. 3), so to be and to walk "according to the spirit" (Rom. viii. 5)

is identical with to be and to walk "according to God" (Eph. iv. 24). Agreeably to this, the Apostle Peter writes of the dead to whom the Gospel is preached, that though they have been judged "according to man" in "the flesh," they may nevertheless live "according to God" in "the spirit" (iv. 6). Thus, "the spirit" must comprehend the whole of the renewed man *qua* renewed, that is, in so far as he is susceptible of moral quality.

The general result is that the flesh of man belongs to "the flesh" entirely and in virtue of its own essential nature, while the Spirit of God belongs to "the spirit" entirely and in virtue of its own essential nature. The spirit of man belongs neither to "the flesh" nor to "the spirit" of its own essential nature, but it belongs to "the flesh" in so far as it is unrenewed, and to "the spirit" in so far as it is renewed, and as renewal consists simply in the expulsion of the principle of sin, or the infusion of the principle of righteousness, this means that it belongs to "the flesh" in so far as it is pervaded by sin, the essential characteristic of the flesh of man, and to "the spirit" in so far as it is pervaded by righteousness, the essential characteristic of the Spirit of God. In other words, the spirit of man belongs to "the flesh" in so far as it has become through union *morally identical* with the flesh of man; the spirit of man belongs to "the spirit" in so far as it has become through union *morally identical* with the Spirit of God. This explains how the proper spirit of man occupies a place so very subordinate throughout the Pauline epistles that some have even gone to the length of denying that the Apostle Paul attributes to man any such thing. The proper spirit of man is not prominent in the epistles of Paul, because these epistles, like the Bible generally, were written to teach, not physiology, but the way of true *morality*, which is the way of salvation or of true religion, and because, from the *moral* point of view, the spirit of man is—while unrenewed, the mere organ of the flesh of man—while renewed, the mere organ of the Spirit of God.

The above result as to the meaning of the two ethically contrasted terms "the flesh" and "the spirit" is strikingly confirmed by reference to the meaning of their well-known



equivalents, "the old man" and "the new man." It is usual to dismiss these latter combinations with the remark that they are *figurative*. But that is merely another way of saying that we are unable to offer any *rationale* of them. Even figurative terms are never applied at random: they are, on the contrary, just as susceptible of rational explanation as any other. We cannot, therefore, shirk the question, Why does the apostle speak of the believer *quoad* unrenewed as "the old man" and of the believer *quoad* renewed as "the new man"? The answer is easily given. The word *man*, when used with strict propriety, is a general designation for a *whole human person*. Now, it is very true that the unrenewed *part* of the believer, which is what is spoken of as his "old man," is not a *whole* human person. And it is equally true that the renewed *part* of the believer, which is what is spoken of as his "new man," is not a *whole* human person. The whole person of the believer is made up, not of either of the parts separately, but of the two combined; and therefore, when each of the separate parts is spoken of as a *man*, it is to be admitted that the word *man* is not used with strict propriety. But then, on the other hand, it is just as true that the unrenewed part of the believer *was once* co-extensive with his whole person, and that the renewed part of the believer is *destined to be* co-extensive with his whole person; and it is obviously on these accounts that the former is spoken of as the old and the latter as the new *man*. To put it otherwise, the believer so far as unrenewed is called an old man, because from the physico-moral point of view he is actually a man in process of decay, destruction, and death; the believer so far as renewed is called a new man, because from the physico-moral point of view he is actually a man in process of growth, construction, and life. Thus the evident *rationale* of these designations offers decided and strong support to the position advocated above that "the flesh" is meant to cover the whole of the unrenewed person, with the exception of the intellectual faculty, which is a mere function and morally indifferent, and that "the spirit" is meant to cover the whole of the renewed person, with the exception again of the merely formal, or unsubstantial, and morally indifferent intellectual faculty.

Remarks very similar apply to the other well-known equivalents for "the flesh" and "the spirit" respectively—viz., "the outward man," and "the inward man." Here, also, the word *man* is employed, because the thing intended either was co-extensive in the past, or is destined to be co-extensive in the future, with a *whole human person*, which is what is strictly and properly called a man. And this is the reason why we before hinted, and now assert, that the expression "inward *man*" in Rom. vii. 22, though it might readily enough be applied to the renewed part of the person of the believer, could not be applied to a part of the person of a mere unbeliever. The word *man* may, with sufficient, if not with the strictest propriety, be used of that which is destined to be a man in the ordinary sense, or which is actually a man though only *in principle*; but it is impossible to discover any ground of propriety for applying such a designation to that which, like the "mind" of an ordinary unbeliever, never was and never will be coincident with a whole human person,—which contains the promise or pledge or principle of nothing beyond its bare self. Those who assert that "the inward *man*" (Rom. vii. 22) refers to the "mind" of the mere unbeliever, are bound to justify its propriety as so used, or at least to offer an adequate reason for the apostle's using it, whether on account of its propriety, or in spite of its impropriety,—things which they have as yet utterly failed to do, or even to attempt doing. As, however, we have already shown that "the flesh," which is opposed to the "mind" or "inward man" in the latter half of Rom. vii., comprehends the whole of the unrenewed person, in so far as he is morally susceptible, and that the "mind" in and of itself is a mere function, destitute alike of moral quality and of determining influence, it is superfluous to insist further on a point which must be presumed to be decisively settled.

If, now, the question be asked how the apostle came to designate the whole unrenewed person, spirit as well as flesh, by the name of "the flesh," and the whole renewed person, spirit of man as well as Spirit of God, by the name of "the spirit," there can be but one answer. The whole is named after that which, from the writer's point of view (the *moral* one), is the

essential and determining part. If sin be an essential characteristic of the flesh, or be involved in its very nature, and if the flesh be the ultimate source and seat of all human sin, then this explains how the word "flesh" came to denote the whole believing man *qua* sinful. And in like manner, if righteousness be an essential characteristic of the Spirit of God, or be involved in its very nature, and if the Spirit of God be the ultimate source and seat of all human righteousness, then this explains how the word "spirit" came to denote the whole believing man *qua* righteous. But in no other way is it possible to understand how the ethical meanings could have arisen out of the physical. The moral character of man as human and sinful might naturally enough be indicated by calling him "fleshly," if the empirical moral character of his spirit were ultimately traceable to the essential moral character of his flesh; but not otherwise—not, for example, if it were *vice versâ*, nor even if sin had merely the same empirical connection with the flesh that it has with the spirit of man. And in the same way, the moral character of man as divine and righteous might naturally enough be indicated by calling him "spiritual," if the empirical moral character of his own proper spirit were ultimately traceable to the essential moral character of the Spirit of God in him; but in no other case.

The same conclusion receives further corroboration from the fact that the believer's sin is very frequently spoken of as if it were all directly bound up with his body, his members, his flesh understood in the physical sense (Rom. vi. 6, 12; vii. 5, 23; viii. 10, 23; Col. ii. 11, &c.)—a thing which must appear surprising in the extreme, if sin do not belong originally, essentially, and especially, and indeed, when the spirit has been fully sanctified, *altogether* to the flesh; and again, on the other side, from the fact that the believer's righteousness is often so entirely associated with the Spirit of God in him, that it is matter of considerable difficulty to decide whether "the spirit" is to be understood of the Divine Spirit alone, or of the unity which is made up of the Divine and the renewed human spirit (Rom. viii. 1-11; Gal. v. 16-26).

We can now also understand how the apostle should have permitted himself to segregate and set upon one side the

sinful, and on another the righteous elements in human nature, as if the two occupied spheres quite distinct from each other, and between which a definite line of demarcation could be drawn. The spirit of the believer belongs, as we have seen, partly to "the flesh," and partly to "the spirit," that is, it is partly under sin and partly under righteousness; and spirit, not being related to space, is a substance in which there can be no such thing as dividing lines. At first sight, therefore, it appears strange that the apostle should speak of "the flesh" and "the spirit," "the old man" and "the new man," as if they were clearly and definitely distinguishable from one another. Such language would indeed be very inexplicable if the flesh of the believer, as well as his spirit, were partly under sin and partly under righteousness. But when we perceive, and bear in mind, that the flesh of the believer is wholly under sin, that "there dwelleth no good thing" in it (Rom. vii. 18), and that it cannot be brought in any degree under righteousness (viii. 7), the apostle's manner of speaking becomes sufficiently plain and intelligible. For although *in actual experience*, the boundary line between "the flesh" and "the spirit" is merely an ethical one, that is, it is not properly speaking a boundary line at all, yet *in the limit* (as mathematicians would say), or when the ideal state has been reached, the boundary line will be a physical as well as an ethical one, that is, it will be a boundary line in the strict and proper sense. Now we have seen again and again that the apostle delights above all things to contemplate the believer in his ideal state, when "the spirit" has been completely put on, and the flesh put off, so far as in present circumstances it can be put off. We ought not, therefore, to feel in the least surprised when he speaks of the believer's sin and his righteousness as occupying separate spheres, as if the one were confined to the substance of his body, and the other to the substance of his spirit, since that is in strict accordance with his usual mode of expressing himself. And the point throws still further light on the apostle's reason for using the terms *flesh* and *spirit*, which are properly physical designations, to denote the two ethical categories into which he divides the person of the believer. It is perfectly true, as we have shown,



that the ethical distinction between "the flesh" and "the spirit" cannot *in the actual state of things* be resolved into the physical distinction between flesh-substance and spirit-substance; but it is not less true that *in the ideal state of things* the physical distinction does include in itself and coincide with the ethical one. Nothing, then, could have been more natural, from the apostle's favourite standpoint, than that the terms which originally denoted the earlier and more palpable distinction should have passed over to denote the later and more subtle one. The same circumstance likewise helps to account for the fact noted in last paragraph that the ethical meaning of the word flesh is often identified with the physical, "the flesh" being interchanged with "the body" or "the members," to which the believer's sin is thought of as strictly confined: when this is done, the apostle is to be understood as regarding the matter from the ideal rather than the actual point of view. All this, however, serves only to prove more convincingly than ever how absolutely essential and unchangeable is the connection between human sin and human flesh in the ordinary physical sense of the word.

The ideal mode of representation rises not unnaturally into special prominence and clearness in connection with the person of Christ. So constantly, indeed, do the New Testament writers represent Christ as having assumed human *flesh*, or become *incarnate*, and nothing more, that one might be tempted to conclude that they attribute to him a human body, but not a human spirit, whose place might be supposed to have been occupied by the Divine Spirit. The inference would, however, be a very precarious one. If Christ had not possessed a human spirit, He could not have been a man, and the Son of Man, as He claimed to be (John v. 27; viii. 40). If He had merely assumed a human body, and again divested Himself of it, His union to human nature must have been temporary as well as partial. It is difficult to see how He could have redeemed humanity in any sense from the power of sin and Satan, if there was no spirit in His humanity to redeem,—how in particular He could be the beginning, the first begotten from the dead, the forerunner, prototype, and head of the whole redeemed community, unless He had taken to

Himself a spirit as well as a body identical in nature with theirs. We read, besides, of Christ having a spirit or soul in which He was troubled (John xiii. 21, *cf.* xii. 27; xi. 33); and there is no doubt that He had all the mental affections, painful as well as pleasant, of an ordinary man (Matt. xxvi. 38),—which seems to imply that He must have had, in addition to the Divine Spirit, a human spirit like every other man. In harmony with this, we find mention of a struggle as between a weak and shrinking human spirit, and the Divine Spirit with which it was endowed and aided (John xii. 27; Luke xxii. 42, *seq.*), and the two are sometimes sharply distinguished from one another (John vii. 17; viii. 28, 29). Moreover, we know that Christ, when He became man, emptied Himself, laying aside the substance and form of Godhead, and assuming the substance and form of slavehood, that He grew and waxed strong in spirit, that He required to be filled with the Divine Spirit, till He attained to all the fulness of God, precisely as each believer does. But Christ could have done these things only if He had possessed from the first moment of the incarnation, a human spirit, such as every other believer possesses. We are therefore bound to suppose that the human spirit of Christ holds a position so much less prominent than His flesh, simply because the former had become the mere organ of His Divine Spirit, whereas the latter was the seat and stronghold of that sin which He came to put away. The ideal mode of representation, in which sin is identified exclusively with the body of flesh, is common enough in the case of other believers, but it is universal in the case of Christ, doubtless because in Him more than in any other, the human spirit was pervaded, purified, assimilated, occupied as a temple, and used as an instrument by the Divine (John viii. 29, 55; xii. 27).

To return, and apply what has been said. We should now be able fully to understand every part and aspect of the conflict described in Rom. vii. and elsewhere. According to the Apostle Paul, intelligent human action is determined by correlative feelings, desires, wills, pleasures, or impulses. It is a grievous error to imagine, as some have done, that the apostle's doctrine is consistent with any theory of human will, that he

offers no decision on the question as to whether intelligent human action be or be not immediately dependent on human feeling as its cause or necessary condition. On the contrary, one would find it difficult to frame, or even to conceive of language more distinctly implying that a man's actions are not independent of, but wholly dependent on, his states of feeling than that which the apostle employs. There are two main sources of feeling, and consequently two main springs of action, in all believers—"the flesh," of which the chief and determining part is the bodily organism, and "the spirit," of which the chief and determining part is the Spirit of God. In the mere unbeliever these two springs of action are practically reduced to one. For, although there is in most men—and in some more than in others—the rudiments of a natural conscience, having its seat in the natural spirit, yet, when the influence of society, direct and indirect, has been discounted, natural conscience is found to be so inefficient as a spring of action that it is left for the most part out of account. The change produced in regeneration might be briefly described as a reorganisation of human sensitivity, and through that of the springs to human action. We might almost say that it is summed up in the destruction of an old will and the creation of a new will, if the word will were used, as it sometimes is,\* like the word appetite, or habit, or disposition, to describe a general susceptibility or predilection for a specific class of actions. Still, it is hardly correct or comprehensive enough to say that the *will* (in the sense explained) has been reorganised, for that word most commonly carries with it a reference to action strictly so called, which means bodily movement, whereas, when the regenerative process has been completed, as it will be in heaven, action in

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\* *E.g.*, when we speak of a man having an *ill-will* toward his neighbour; the meaning being that he has a general tendency to do what is injurious to his neighbour: or, more generally, when we speak of a man who is *self-willed*; the meaning being that he has a general tendency to do what appears good to himself, without regard to the feelings, wishes, opinions, or interests of others: or, again, when we speak of a man possessing a *resolute will*; the meaning being that he has a general tendency to do what he has once resolved upon: or, lastly, when we speak of a *good man* or a *bad man*; this being equivalent to saying that the one has a general tendency to do what is right, and the other a general tendency to do what is wrong.

the proper sense will, in all likelihood, be an impossibility. It is better, therefore, to say that the sensitivity—which is more general than the capacity of willing—has been extended upon one side, and contracted or curtailed on another. There is a crucifixion, a deadening or destruction of sensitivity on that side of the personality to which “the world” appeals, and a creation, quickening, or constituting of sensitivity on that side of the personality to which God appeals. The renewed spirit is made sensitive to impressions which it can explain and account for in no other way than by saying that they are “from above,” and which beget feelings in the form of loves, hatreds, desires, longings, wishes, impulses, that change the entire current of the active life. There is no alteration in the faculty of thought proper, though the objects of thought and the decisions of conscience are widely different. What is created is a new main centre or source of feeling and impulse, which, as it is of an opposite nature, gives rise to a standing conflict with the old main centre or source of feeling and impulse. Otherwise expressed, the change consists in having the feelings, which are the objects of thought, altered in so far as they are morally wrong, and brought into perfect accordance with the feelings or will of God. In one word, it is to be enabled to love as God loves, and so to live as God lives. This implies that as the feelings with which the “mind” of the renewed man is occupied are the fruits of “the spirit,” so the feelings with which the “mind” of the unrenewed man is occupied are the fruits of “the flesh.” Hence we read, not indeed of “the flesh of the mind” on the part of the natural man, but of “the mind of the flesh” (Col. ii, 18), which amounts practically to the same thing, and corresponds to “the spirit of the mind” on the part of the spiritual man. “The mind of the flesh” differs from “the flesh of the mind” only in the circumstance that in the one case “the flesh” is regarded as the servant or subordinate which furnishes materials for the “mind” to manipulate, in the other case, the “mind” is regarded as the servant or subordinate which manipulates the materials belonging to and supplied by “the flesh.” Thus the “mind” is something that stands above both “the flesh” and “the spirit,” that may be occupied or made use of by either, and that remains unaffected



when the one has given place to the other. The "mind" is *the unchangeable centre of the personality*. And this puts in our hands a complete key to the peculiar language of Rom. vii. 14-25. If the "mind," in the closing verses of that chapter, were what many hold it to be—a direct source of impulses to good action in the natural man, corresponding as far as it goes to "the spirit" in the man who is undergoing renewal—how could the apostle have written in the opening of chap. xii., "Be not fashioned according to this world, but be ye transformed *by the renewing of your mind?*" A "mind" naturally good, and the immediate source of impulses to good action, would not require to be transformed by being renewed. If, on the other hand, the "mind" be the unchangeable centre of the personality, which may be occupied and made use of either by "the flesh" or by "the spirit," this explains how the apostle can identify his personality at one time with "the flesh," and at another with "the spirit," according as he thinks of the "mind" as being occupied with the one or the other,—how he can even seem to divide his personality into two, and identify it *both* with "the flesh" *and* with "the spirit," when he thinks of the "mind" as being occupied partly with the one and partly with the other at the same time. It explains, also, how he can designate the renewed part of the believer as his "mind" simply, and how, when he does so, the "mind" is thought of as occupied especially, and almost exclusively, by "the spirit," "the flesh" being regarded as relatively if not absolutely blind or unconscious.

We can see, further, that the impossibility of sinning referred to in the opening paragraph of chap. vi. is not a physical, but a moral impossibility, an impossibility arising from the predominating influence of the Spirit of God in the heart. It is only in heaven that the moral impossibility will have developed into a physical impossibility either in the case of Christ or in that of believers. The Spirit of God dwelt with such power in Christ while on earth that sin was never permitted to reign in His mortal body, or to develop into action, but all the same Christ was tempted to sin, and the thing was evidently and altogether possible from a physical point of view. The Apostle John, who usually occupies the

highest ideal standpoint in his representation of Christ, declares that "the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father), *full* of grace and truth . . . For of His *fulness* we all received, and grace for grace" (i. 14, 15). Such language must indeed be understood as applicable only in a relative sense to Christ while on earth, being applicable in the absolute sense only after He ascended to glory. Christ was not absolutely filled with the Holy Ghost during His earthly life; He was not so filled before His baptism, for instance, else He could not be said to have been filled after His baptism; nor was His glory ever absolutely like that of the only begotten of the Father (John xiii. 32; xiv. 28; xvii. 1, 5). The Apostle Paul, we may rely upon it, states truth as well as John when he says that Christ emptied Himself, and laid aside His glory, taking the form of a slave. Still, when God sent Christ into the world, He sanctified Him (John x. 36), giving not the Spirit by measure (iii. 34), and He could say in consequence to His bitterest enemies, "Which of you convicteth Me of sinning?" (viii. 46), "I do always the things that are well pleasing to Him" (vv. 28, 29). But that the sanctification of Christ was not completed at the outset of His earthly career is clear from the following:—"Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth. As Thou didst send Me into the world [having sanctified Me], even so sent I them into the world [having sanctified them]. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified in the truth" (xvii. 17-19). These words are proof-positive that according to John not less than according to Paul the earthly experience of Christ was in every respect parallel to that of each believer. When, therefore, we read elsewhere, "The prince of this world cometh, and he hath nothing in Me" (xiv. 30), we must do so in the light of "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil one" (xvii. 14, 15). Similarly, the believer is represented ideally in the statement, "Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin, because his seed abideth in him, and he cannot sin,

because he is begotten of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil" (1 John iii. 9, 10). That there was a sense in which the prince of the world had mastery over Christ, as he has mastery over all His followers, is sufficiently proved by the fact that both He and they have to pass through death, the power of which is expressly said to belong to the devil (Heb. ii. 14).

An objection, however, has been raised to this conception of the person of Christ, a brief notice of which shall conclude the present chapter, which has already extended itself to inordinate length. It is asked, "What are we in that case to think of as the subject of the ἁμαρτία of the flesh of Christ, if it was not His ego, His soul, as that to which His indivisible personality attaches? Or how can the σὰρξ, pure and simple, entirely separated from the personal principle of life to which it serves as an organ, have ἁμαρτία? Or how can a concrete ego exist in a fleshly life, without feeling it as its own life, at least so far as to experience its ἐπιθυμεῖν as its own?"\* These may seem serious questions, but they are not difficult to answer. We must start from the presupposition that the person of Christ, like the persons of all who are conformed to His image, was made up of a body, a spirit, and an intellectual faculty. We may assume, further, that the human spirit of Christ was so pervaded and occupied by His Divine Spirit that the sphere or seat of sin was practically limited to His body. We may not assume that the intellectual faculty of Christ was susceptible of moral quality any more than that of His followers. These three parts together make up Christ's personality in the full and proper sense of the word. The body of the flesh, as long as it continued in union with the Spirit of Christ, and with His intellectual faculty, was a part of His personality in the very same sense that the other two parts were parts of His personality. And, of course, when the word personality is used in this its widest sense, the sin in Christ's flesh *did* belong to His personality, and the consequence was that He had to undergo the penalty of death as the wages of the sin He had assumed. This is the very point

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\* Phleiderer's *Paulinism*, E. T., i. 154.

and substance of the apostle's statement, that God "made Him [= His personality or ego] sin on our behalf, in order that we [= our personality or ego] might become righteousness" (2 Cor. v. 21). If these words do not imply that Christ's ego was made and was sinful in the same identical sense that every believer's ego is made and is righteous, then it is impossible for words to imply anything. When, on the other hand, the personality of Christ is identified with His spirit alone, and particularly with His Divine Spirit, the sin which He assumed cannot be said to have belonged to His personality, but rather to His flesh, which was united in an intimate manner to His Spirit, without, however, becoming part of it. So that He might have said with Paul in regard to the lusts of the flesh, "It is no more *I* that do it, but sin that dwelleth in My flesh." If it be said that the Divine Spirit could not have united itself to a human spirit, and so united itself to flesh of sin, without being pervaded by sin, it may be replied that this difficulty, if difficulty it be, is in no way peculiar to the person of Christ, but attaches in an equal degree to the persons of all believers. I shall defy any man to produce a tittle of evidence to show that the indwelling and inworking of the Divine Spirit in Christ differed in any respect from the indwelling and inworking of the same Divine Spirit in each believer. Yet no one thinks of alleging that the Spirit of God is pervaded by the sin of the believer, or that the believer's sins belong to the Spirit of God. On the contrary, every believer feels that the more fully and powerfully the Spirit of God dwells in him the more impossible it is for him to commit sin. Sin is an impulse directed to what is wrong. But the Spirit of God impels and is consciously felt to impel only to what is right. How then can it be pretended that the Spirit of God is the author or proprietor of the believer's sins? And if this be the case in the experience of the believer, why should it not have been the case in the experience of Christ? If the spirit of man could be redeemed from under sin only by being united to and reinforced by the Spirit of God, to which it was originally akin, who shall say that God might not have accomplished the matter in that way? Surely there is nothing strange, absurd,



or unintelligible in saying that the sinful propensities that existed and arose in Christ's flesh were constantly met, resisted, and overcome by the power of the Divine Spirit dwelling in Him, when this very thing is the daily experience of all believers. If, again, it be asserted that sinful propensities cannot exist in mere flesh without passing over into the conscious spirit by which it is animated, this may prove that the human spirit of Christ shared in the sinfulness of His flesh, but it will not prove that His Divine Spirit did so, nor will it in the least affect the ultimate result that the human nature which Christ assumed was redeemed from under sin by the power of the Spirit of God in precisely the same way that the spirit of each believer is. The assertion, however, may be called in question. The Apostle Paul certainly holds that sinful tendencies exist in the flesh considered by itself, and indeed that all sinful tendencies take their rise there. Any objections that may be urged against this idea ought not to be raised in connection with the person of Christ, as if they had a special and peculiar bearing on that, since they will bear equally on the apostle's entire teaching in regard to the state of the material world in general, and of the human body in particular. Besides, the existence of original tendencies to sin in human nature, and even of tendencies having their special seat in the bodily organism, is a fact of experience which can by no possibility be explained away. I own, therefore, I can find no more difficulty in conceiving of "the spirit," whose characteristic is righteousness being pitted against "the flesh," whose characteristic is sin in the person of Christ, than I can find in conceiving the same state of things in the person of each believer (Rom. viii. 10). The principle involved is exactly the same in both cases, and it is really too much that objections should be urged against the one that are never thought of in connection with the other.

One difficulty there is in the way of understanding the precise constitution of the person of Christ, but it is a difficulty of a purely speculative character that does not touch His relation to sin. It relates to what I have called in the case of the believer the unchangeable centre of His personality. And here we had best refrain from all attempts at definition. We are

quite unable to conceive of intelligence different in almost any respect from our own, and we are least of all able to think of intelligence transcending our own. Nothing is easier than to fancy to ourselves changes of very considerable extent in the region of feeling or sensitivity, because such changes are matter of common experience; but it is far otherwise in regard to the faculty of intelligence. As already observed, regeneration produces no change in the intellectual faculty proper. Even inspiration, so far as one can judge, operates through stimulating the emotional sensibilities, and thereby quickening and strengthening the *ordinary* laws of association. The relation of Divine to human intelligence is a speculative question on which it is neither necessary nor desirable to enter. The idea that Christ had two intellectual faculties, the one human the other Divine, is highly improbable in itself, rests upon very inadequate grounds, and ought not to be imposed upon any one. But what the nature of His intellectual faculty was, and whether or how far it was depotentiated, we shall not presume to say. Something must be left to future research.

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